

Rolling Stone

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RS1261

"All the
News
That Fits"

FEATURES

The War on Drugs

After 45 years and more than \$1 trillion wasted, America still lacks the political will to change its failed drug policy.

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Why is Chris Evans having such a difficult time being Captain America?

By JOSH EELLS 36

Prince, 1958-2016

Rock star, funk lord, provocateur, genius: How he created a world but, in the end, could only go it alone. Plus: Our last visit to Paisley Park; tributes from Questlove and more. 40

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How Coachella's architect pulled together six of the biggest artists ever for a one-of-a-kind event in the fall. 11

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ON THE COVER Prince photographed in New York on December 22nd, 1982, by Richard Avedon/© The Richard Avedon Foundation.

JUMP AROUND
The 1975 spread the love at Coachella. Read more about the fest on page 28.



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Q+A

THE FUNK IS BACK!

Soul singer Charles Bradley's new album, *Changes*, blends heartbreak anthems with James Brown-inspired funk. We spoke to him about the death of his mother, covering Black Sabbath, and why it's never too late to find success.

Bradley

TV

ON THE SCENE WITH GERVAIS

Ricky Gervais tells us about his latest movie, *Special Correspondents*, a comedy about a radio journalist who fakes reporting on an uprising in South America.

BOOKS

THE 10 BEST BEATLES BOOKS

In honor of Philip Norman's new Paul McCartney bio, we round up the best Fab Four books, from Michael Braun's *Love Me Do* to Ian MacDonald's *Revolution in the Head*.

POLITICS

ROCK AGAINST POLLUTION

The music industry is working to reduce the massive carbon footprints that concerts leave behind, focusing on getting venues to stop selling single-use plastic containers.

WHEN ROCK MAKES A STAND

In the wake of Bruce Springsteen's canceled North Carolina show, we talk about rock's best activist moments. Plus: What ROLLING STONE staffers are listening to around the office; and we respond to reader mail about the classic-rock megaconcert. The Rolling Stone Music Now podcast goes live every Monday.

ALL THIS AND MORE AT
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NEW!



Correspondence

Love Letters
& Advice



Misfit Royalty

THIS WAS AN INCREDIBLY well-researched and written cover story ["The Curse of the Ramones," RS 1259]. Mikal Gilmore captured the essence of the band's dysfunctional relationships and its prolific body of work. The way some revere the Beatles is the way I feel about the Ramones.

Ryan Gilfedder, Forest Hills, NY

GREAT PIECE ON THE BAND that helped cement my music taste. Thanks for helping to educate the new crop of punks about the roots of this music. (No, son, Blink-182 did not invent the genre.)

Andy Lippitt, Stoughton, MA

AS A DIE-HARD RAMONES fan, I loved the cover story. I was surprised Gilmore didn't mention the subgenre of pop punk that includes bands like Screeching Weasel, the Riverdales and the Huntingtons, ones that used the Ramones' sonic formula – Johnny's signature riff, Dee Dee playing along with Johnny note for note, and bubblegum-pop melodies – to create songs and albums that rival those of the Ramones themselves.

Rob Berahovich, Berkeley, CA

WHAT A STORY! WHAT A SAD, tragic story!

Robb Camp, via the Internet

Punk-Rock Showdown

To accompany Mikal Gilmore's Ramones cover story, our editors compiled a comprehensive list of punk rock's most iconic records ["The 40 Greatest Punk Albums of All Time," RS 1259]. Readers from around the country weighed in on the rankings and on records we failed to include.

NO DISRESPECT TO BILLIE Joe Armstrong, but the Dead Kennedys' *Fresh Fruit for Rotting Vegetables* merits a higher ranking than No. 40 and was arguably a far bigger influence on punk than Green Day's *Dookie*.

Mark Flythe, Hamilton, NJ

WHERE'S THE FRIGGIN' MC5? There would be no Ramones if it weren't for Fred Sonic Smith! *Kick Out the Jams* is the bible not only for every heavy-metal band but for every punk band as well!

John Hefty, Crestone, CO

DEAD BOYS' "YOUNG, LOUD and Snotty" not at the top of this list? Here's hoping Stiv Bators comes back from the grave and spits on you.

Richie Fisher, Toms River, NJ

HOW IN THE WORLD DID Yoko Ono/*Plastic Ono Band* (1970) not even make the list? I challenge anyone to cite any song (save for anything from Iggy Pop's first

album) that predates *YO/POB*'s "Why?" as one of the first truly punk songs. Rage, powerful guitar and a kick-ass rock & roll drummer.

*Robert Goodman
Via the Internet*



THE GREATEST PUNK CAN never make a list, or be captured on an LP. It's played in your mom's basement, where the walls are left dripping with the sweat of strangers, and it still smells when she returns from holiday.

*Chris Barnhart
Portland, OR*

Stealth Tactics

I COMMEND ALEX MORRIS ON her brave, well-written article and for sharing her experience so publicly ["The War on Planned Parenthood," RS 1259]. Planned Parenthood should receive funding for the great work it does, not only providing birth control but helping those devastated by the loss of a pregnancy (or those who don't want to be pregnant, for whatever reason).

Lisa McGrath, Santa Cruz, CA

I CONSIDER MYSELF PRO-life, but I also strongly support Planned Parenthood for the simple reason that it saves far more lives than it ends. If you really want to stop abortion, then make it totally unnecessary by ensuring that every woman has access to Plan B.

Nick Reid, Bellefonte, PA

IF RICH WHITE MEN COULD get pregnant, there would be more Planned Parenthood clinics than there are Starbucks.

Robert Gunn, San Francisco

Space Shot

THAT WAS A HILARIOUS STORY about spending \$100 million to find E.T. ["The High-Tech Hunt for Alien Life," RS 1259]. Why not just look up in the sky? Aliens are zipping around us. They're here and have been forever.

Terry Neal, Huntsville, AL

ANYONE WHO HAS WITNESSED the meteoric rise of Donald J. Trump in the polls should not be surprised that SETI has suddenly accelerated its search for intelligent life in the universe. Coincidence? I think not.

*Mike Jacques
Richmond Hill, Ontario*

Cuomo Revived

ERIK HEDEGAARD REALLY brought Rivers Cuomo to life in his terrific profile ["The Dream Life of Rivers Cuomo," RS 1259]. Putting the convoluted sex stuff aside, I loved finding out that playing Labyrinth is part of Cuomo's morning ritual. It could be a kind of meditation if screaming in frustration were part of your practice.

Larry Pierce, via the Internet

Country Breakout

I LOVED MARGO PRICE'S performance on *Saturday Night Live*, but, honey, I'm sorry, a weekend in jail is not the same as going to prison ["The New Honky-Tonk Heroine," RS 1259]. It's somewhat insulting to those of us who know this from experience.

Lori Trippe, Lancaster, PA

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The Playlist

ARTISTS HONOR THE PURPLE ONE: THE BEST NEW COVERS

ALL-
PRINCE
SPECIAL

1. D'Angelo "Sometimes It Snows in April"

Performing on *Fallon* (and backed by Princess), D'Angelo turned Prince's mournful ballad into an elegy for the genius we've all lost.



4. David Gilmour "Comfortably Numb" and "Purple Rain"

Playing the Floyd classic at a London show, Gilmour worked an epic Prince homage into his solo, holding a guitar-god séance.



5. LCD Soundsystem "Controversy"

Not every Prince tribute was a sad farewell – at Week Two of Coachella, LCD got the crowd moving as they nailed this classic synth-funk jam.



6. Cast of 'Hamilton' "Let's Go Crazy"

As the *Hamilton* cast took its bows, Lin-Manuel Miranda stirring read the song's opening monologue, and a Revolutionary dance party broke out on Broadway.



7. Janelle Monáe "Take Me With U"

Monáe worked closely with Prince, and her blazing take on the *Purple Rain* funk rocker at New Orleans Jazz Fest felt like a plea to join him in the cosmos. "I am because he was," she said.

2. Bruce Springsteen "Purple Rain"

Two nights after Prince died, Springsteen opened a Brooklyn show bathed in purple light, playing Prince's most beloved song – saying goodbye to a fellow legend in a moment of pure arena catharsis.

3. Chris Stapleton "Nothing Compares 2 U"

Nashville iconoclast Stapleton's growled country-soul take was a genre-bending moment Prince would've loved.

MY LIST



Chris Robinson

Five Songs for Psychedelic Inspiration

The Black Crowes front-man is on a solo tour, and hosting the psychedelic radio show *Gurus Galore* on Sirius XM.

Gong

"I Never Glid Before"

Don't mention "psychedelic music" if you aren't familiar with Gong. This is the perfect union of great jazz and rock, under a psychedelic dome.

Broadcast and the Focus Group "The Be Colony"

There's a darkness in the vocals, but it's wrapped in a beautiful pop moment of great imagination.

Canned Heat "Poor Moon"

This is a song about the environment, where they basically say, "If we could, we'd fuck up the moon."

Judee Sill "Enchanted Sky Machines"

Judee was the first artist signed to Geffen Records, but there's little info out there about her bizarre life. This song has a heavy message, but it's still beautiful.

Ariel Kalma "Ecstasy Musical Mind Yoga"

The track is so expansive, and can take you so many places in a few minutes. It's New Age, but incredibly dynamic.



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**MOUNT
ROCKMORE**
McCartney,
Mick Jagger,
Dylan, Pete
Townshend

Legends in the Desert

AFTER THE SUN SETS AND THE sky turns purple over Indio Valley's Empire Polo Club grounds on October 7th, Bob Dylan will take the stage. Later, the Rolling Stones will follow. It will be the first day of a historic three-day concert that will also include Neil Young, Paul McCartney, the Who and Roger Waters – two acts a day, performing full sets with their own stage productions. The event – which is the result of a year of secret meetings and careful

How the architect of
Coachella pulled
together six of the
biggest rock acts of
all time for a one-of-a-
kind event this fall

BY PATRICK DOYLE

negotiations – doesn't have a name. "What name could be bigger than these acts?" says Paul Tollett, the CEO of Goldenvoice, who put the event together.

For the past 17 years, Tollett has staged the Coachella Music & Arts Festival, also held at the Indio, California, site, which has made its reputation with high-profile reunions like the Pixies, Rage Against the Machine and Guns n' Roses. When the city of Indio granted permission for an October festival, Tollett wanted [Cont. on 12]

PHOTOGRAPHS USED IN ILLUSTRATION, FROM LEFT: STEVE JENNINGS/GETTY IMAGES; GARY MILLER/FILMMAGIC; DAVID VINCENT/AP IMAGES; KEVIN MAZUR/GETTY IMAGES

DESERT CONCERT

[Cont. from 11] to top himself. “The theme was rock & roll bands that have been playing consistently since the early days,” he says. Added Roger Daltrey of the Who, “It’s the greatest remains of our era. I’m glad we made it.”

Two years ago, Tollett made a wish list that he says consisted only of the six acts. He traveled to see each one play, and he sold them on the idea slowly. “If I’d made a financial offer first, I would have been rejected,” he says. “[The Stones] asked what I was working on. I said, ‘I’m working on one of the greatest shows of all time. I don’t know what that means, but I’ll come back to you.’” The biggest challenges included getting the first act to sign on (Tollett is not saying who it was). “A couple said, ‘What are you going to do if we don’t do it?’ [I said] ‘If we don’t get these six, we’re not going to do the show.’ They said, ‘OK, that’s kind of interesting.’” The only act Tollett has not met with personally is Dylan: “I live out near him, but he’s not the type of guy you run into at 7-Eleven.” It’s been reported that acts are receiving upward of \$7 million per set. “They’re all getting what they’re worth,” says Tollett.

While Coachella has a standing field, a “mini-stadium” is being built for the October event, with a pit up front, seats and a general-admission area further back. Three-day passes will run from \$399 to \$1,599, not including VIP packages (single-day tickets will be sold for \$199). It’s steep, but Tollett points out it’s not far off from Coachella prices. Despite the big names, it’s an open question whether a festival setting will appeal to a baby-boomer crowd: “Every concert is a risk. It’s definitely kept me up at night. When we launched Coachella, we knew what the crowd was going to be. This one’s a head-scratcher.” Adds Scooter Weintraub, who manages Gary Clark Jr. and Sheryl Crow, “I can’t imagine this would not do well. This is dream-team stuff.”

For Tollett, the concert is the highlight of a career that began when he dropped out of college to promote punk shows in the early Eighties. He’s since built Goldenvoice into an empire; Coachella grossed \$84 million last year. For part of the year, Tollett lives in a house on the fest site with employees, and hammers out details in late-night picnic-table meetings. “I had big dreams in the beginning, but nothing even close to this,” he says. “It’s hard to even comprehend.”



HOLD UP
Beyoncé
in the
Lemonade
film.

The Small Army Behind ‘Lemonade’

Beyoncé wrangled indie rockers, spoken-word artists, a reggae song written for Rihanna and much more for her landmark LP

BEYONCÉ’S “LEMONADE,” released on April 23rd, was a triumph of sound and storytelling, an intense and adventurous “visual album” (accompanied by an hourlong film) about race, infidelity and marital meltdown. It was also a marvel of project management. Beyoncé, famously controlling and tight-lipped about her creative process, oversaw a cast of nearly 100 collaborators, from Jack White and Diplo to dozens of unknown producers and songwriters. “Beyoncé is really involved at all stages,” says Jonny Coffey, who co-wrote and co-produced “Freedom.” “She produces, alters and arranges tracks in ways I wouldn’t think of,” adds MeLo-X, the Brooklyn rapper-producer who worked with her on “Hold Up.”

Malik Yusef, a Chicago spoken-word artist and producer who co-wrote “Sandcastles,” says his contribution began with a conversation with Beyoncé at the NBA’s All-Star Weekend last year. Despite the song’s personal tone, Beyoncé didn’t ask for the lyrics to be tailor-made for her: “She just explained she was looking for greatness.” Producer Just Blaze says he “didn’t have a clear picture” of the album’s story line about a marriage tested by a cheating husband, but through working on “Freedom” and an early demo of “Daddy Lessons,” he began “getting an idea of what the narrative was.”

Making a track was often a labyrinthine process. “Hold Up” originated with a tweet

sent in 2011 by Vampire Weekend frontman Ezra Koenig. Later, he wrote lyrics based on that tweet during a studio session with Diplo. Josh Tillman, a.k.a. Father John Misty, provided lyrics and a melody that became the first verse, and British songwriter MNEK added the bridge. When MNEK met Beyoncé, she already had the idea for each song to correspond to a different title card in the film, featuring words like “Intuition” or “Redemption.” “She told me, ‘This is the direction I want the lyrics to go,’” he says. “I did a few verse things, and she heard one bit, that middle-eight, and loved it.” Eventually, “Hold Up” made its way to MeLo-X, who finished the song with Beyoncé.

The origins of “All Night” had nothing to do with Beyoncé. “We wrote it for Rihanna,” says Theron Thomas. “I ain’t never met Beyoncé.” He and his brother Timothy, who were born in the Virgin Islands and record as R. City, wrote the song around a beat Diplo showed them. Theron was skeptical when he heard Beyoncé was interested. “I was like, ‘You serious? It’s reggae. How’s that going to sound with her singing?’”

The production on the initial demo, Theron says, was minimal – “just guitar and light drums” – but producers eventually filled out the song with lush strings and a horn sample from Outkast’s “SpottieOttieDopaliscious.” “I hadn’t heard Beyoncé’s version until the album came out,” says Theron. “She killed it.”

DAVID PEISNER

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MARATHON MAN
Vedder onstage
at the Hampton
Coliseum in Virginia

Pearl Jam: Louder, Looser

Three-hour sets, Cheap Trick covers, and 'Vs.' all the way through: Inside the road warriors' intense new gigs

BY ANDY GREENE

ABOUT THREE HOURS BEFORE Pearl Jam took the stage at the Bon Secours Wellness Arena in Greenville, South Carolina, on April 16th, Eddie Vedder gave his bandmates a big surprise: He wanted to perform the group's 1993 LP *Vs.* straight through. "He said, 'It's Record Store Day, so let's do a record,'" recalls guitarist Mike McCready. "It was cool to see fans' eyes light up when they realized what was happening."

The South Carolina show was only the fifth on Pearl Jam's 2016 tour, but the band had already played nearly 90 different songs – including surprise covers, like Cheap Trick's "Surrender" and a bit of "Purple Rain" the night Prince died. Shows have averaged more than three hours. "Before the tour, we had a meeting where we said, 'We're all getting a bit older. Let's

think about cutting the set down a bit,'" says McCready. "There's definitely times I'd rather play for two hours, but Ed always gets into it, and we follow his lead."

The tour coincides with Pearl Jam's 25th anniversary, but since the band celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2011 with a documentary, soundtrack and its own festival, it isn't making a big deal out of this milestone. "Ed cares about the legacy," McCready says. "But I feel like we covered it in the 20th." Instead, Pearl Jam are bringing their usual marathon gigs to less-traveled venues, especially across the South, before the tour culminates this summer in two-night stands at Chicago's Wrigley Field and Boston's Fenway Park.

Vedder writes out the set lists each night, but the band reaches all other major decisions – including keeping all tickets below

\$90 – democratically. Days after the South Carolina show, the group made the agonizing call to cancel a gig in Raleigh, North Carolina, to protest the state's law that discriminates against transgender citizens. "There were drawn-out meetings over a period of days," McCready says. "We wanted to play, but we felt we needed to support people that don't have a voice. We felt like it was morally right to boycott the state."

Plans for Pearl Jam's first album since 2013's *Lightning Bolt* are beginning to come together. "We're all working on songs for it," McCready says, "but I'm not sure when we're going to record." There are also no plans to tour after this summer, though McCready has one fantasy in mind: "I'd love to do a residency where we play every record," he says. "I mean the B sides too, one record a night. It would be so cool." 



**MAKE IT LAST
ALL NIGHT**
Mike Campbell,
Petty and Tench
(from left) in
Malibu.

Mudcrutch Dig Deeper for '2'

Tom Petty's early-Seventies band returns with a second album, featuring an updated sound, edgier tunes and a bit of 'psychedelic bluegrass'

BACK IN 2007, WHEN TOM PETTY GOT HIS PREFAME band Mudcrutch back together to make their first album, they had a simple agenda: to capture the live fire of their 1970s days in Gainesville, Florida, and to get it done quickly. For their second LP, called simply 2, the band had more time (about a month of tracking, versus 10 days) and way more songs – almost two albums' worth, with each member contributing to the writing instead of just Petty. "I wanted this album to have more of an edge to it," Petty says. "I wanted some new sounds. I didn't want us to get hung up on being anything in particular."

Songs like the lead single, "Trailer," as well as album cuts like "Dreams of Flying" and "Hope" are classic Petty – rollicking, anthemic roots rock. But the album works even when Petty's not

singing, as on drummer Randall Marsh's "Beautiful World" and guitarist Tom Leadon's "The Other Side of the Mountain," which Petty describes as "psychedelic bluegrass."

Formed in 1970, Mudcrutch released two singles before splitting up in 1975. Petty plays bass in the group, which keyboardist Benmont Tench says is key to its sound: "When you change the swing, you change everything." The band will launch its first-ever nationwide tour, a 16-date jaunt, on May 26th. For now, Petty won't speculate about whether there will be a *Mudcrutch 3*, but he's happy for their second act. "[In the Seventies] we were all about playing live and didn't really understand recording," he says. "But fortunately we've been able to get back together and show what we're capable of."

JENNY ELISCU

STUDIO NOTES

AVETT BROTHERS AND RICK RUBIN GET AMBITIOUS

For *True Sadness* (due June 24th), the Avett Brothers and producer Rick Rubin shook up the band's rootsy sound by getting seriously experimental: Using three different studios, they alternated between electronic beats and live instruments, recorded with different lineups, and constantly recut and "deconstructed" songs, according to Scott Avett. The result is a



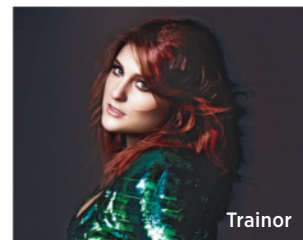
Scott
Avett

highly catchy LP that runs from lush, big-beat pop to sparse Americana. "We trust Rick," Avett says. "Not only as a producer but as a friend."

KORY GROW

HOW MEGHAN TRAINOR FOUND A NEW SOUND

Best New Artist Grammy winner Meghan Trainor returns May 13th with *Thank You*, which expands her sound into dance-, rap- and Caribbean-influenced tunes. Epic Records' L.A. Reid had rejected the LP as too similar to Trainor's debut, so she scheduled an emergency session with producer Ricky Reed. The pair cooked up the thumping "No," which became *Thank You's*



Trainor

first single. "As soon as he played it, L.A. jumped up and said, 'That's what I'm talkin' about!'" Trainor says. "He played it 29 times that evening." CHRISTOPHER R. WEINGARTEN



Tom DeLonge's Space Odyssey

Estranged from Blink-182, the guitarist has found happiness as a UFO-obsessed family man

BY PATRICK DOYLE

ON A SUNNY AFTERNOON IN San Diego, Tom DeLonge sits in front of a Mac in a darkened room, searching “black triangle UFOs” on YouTube. He plays a clip of a mysterious glowing craft, which hovers over Paris before disappearing in a flash of light. Conspiracy theorists refer to it as a TR-3B; some believe it’s a machine the government secretly built from gathering UFO intelligence. “It’s pure, unadulterated anti-gravity,” he says, marveling at the craft’s movement. “It would scare people if they knew this existed.”

For as long as he can remember – even before he sang “Aliens Exist” on Blink-182’s multiplatinum pop-punk classic, *Enema of the State*, in 1999 – DeLonge has been obsessed with what he calls “the phenomenon.” He can tell you about reports of triangular aircraft spotted over Belgium in 1990. He can tell you about the airships of 1897, blimp-shaped objects reported throughout the West over the course of three months. “They went across the country and landed in certain cities, and mayors and senators met with the pilots,” says DeLonge. “It was national news. And then they completely disappeared. No one knows who they were.”

The guitarist has made several aircraft-spotting pilgrimages himself, driving his Airstream trailer to Nevada test sites like Area 51 and Tonopah, bringing spotting scopes, satellite phones and night-vision goggles (“They’re registered with the State Department – I can’t leave the country with them”).

He’s taken his obsession to a new level with To the Stars, an industrial-style office space he sees as his own mini-Disney – a “transmedia” experience for his music, books and film. It sits on a strip of skate and surf shops, across the street from the best fish tacos in town, and includes a small store, decked in comic-book wallpaper, stocked with his releases and a library of UFO literature.

DeLonge’s latest project is *Sekret Machines Book 1: Chasing Shadows*, a 700-page novel he wrote with UNC Charlotte Shakespeare professor A.J. Hartley. Though fictional, it’s written with information DeLonge says he gleaned from “sources within the aerospace industry and the Department of Defense and NASA.” Then he adds, “That sentence, specifically, was approved for me to say.” *Chasing Shadows* theorizes that alien technology not only exists, but that the government has known about it for decades and has even replicated some of it.

Online, DeLonge has been called batshit insane, delusional and a possible paranoid



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schizophrenic. "It's very hard to think, 'How did this guy in a band get access like that?'" he says. "It sounds crazy. But it's because I can speak to a very specific audience. I earned their trust. I knew my material."

In DeLonge's office, the only sign of his previous life is a large framed drawing of Blink-182 on *The Simpsons* in 2003. At that time, they were four albums into a run that propelled them from San Diego punk clubs to MTV's *TRL* alongside Britney Spears and 'N Sync. DeLonge and bassist Mark Hoppus had a Beavis-and-Butt-Head-like rapport, bantering onstage about poop and singing songs like "Fuck a Dog." Although Blink wrote about serious topics like teen suicide and divorce, DeLonge still can't shake his goofball persona. Recently, a fan sent him a book to autograph, asking him to "draw a dick, please." (He did.)

But DeLonge and Hoppus' relationship started to crumble as soon as Blink found huge success. Hoppus was stung when DeLonge formed a side project, Box Car Racer, that included Blink drummer Travis Barker but not Hoppus. They had several blow-out fights in 2004, when DeLonge refused to commit to another big tour, and the band broke up. "The band has always been dysfunctional," DeLonge says. "The only time we all really communicated daily was in Blink's first, sort of, trimester."

In 2005, DeLonge formed Angels and Airwaves, an ambitious group that mixed punk with U2-like anthems. DeLonge predicted it would be "the greatest rock & roll revolution for this generation" and compared it to the Second Coming of Christ. Now, he admits he was "superwired" on painkillers during that time. He eventually kicked pills by going cold turkey, spending five days vomiting and writhing on the floor of his house. "Narcotics are demons," he says.

In 2008, Barker survived a plane crash in South Carolina that killed four others. Nearly losing their drummer convinced Blink-182 to try to put aside their differences, and they reunited to play for their biggest crowds ever. But, gradually, DeLonge seemed like he was somewhere else. Onstage, he wore his hat pulled down over his eyes and clothing that advertised an Angels and Airwaves film project. For 2011's *Neighborhoods*, he clashed with his bandmates over the sound of the album and recorded his parts in a San Diego studio two hours away from Hoppus and Barker. "I was so bored with just what we've been doing for so long," he says. "I think we should have been pushing ourselves."

By then, Hoppus and DeLonge were going months without speaking, commu-



WHAT'S MY AGE, AGAIN?
Hoppus, actor Seth Green, DeLonge, porn star Janine Lindemulder and Barker (from left) in 1999.

nicating through separate managers. "You know somebody really well," DeLonge says, "but as they grew up, got married, had kids and started their own life path, they became someone pretty different."

DeLonge says he was blindsided when Blink issued a statement last year saying he had quit. At the time, he says, he was working with Marvel on a theatrical project involving Blink-182 and negotiating a new record contract. DeLonge disagreed with the terms, which required an immediate six-month commitment to the band. To the Stars was already up and running, and he was deep into the first of a planned nine novels. "I couldn't tell the band I was working with people in the government," he says.

Hoppus and Barker have been recording an album with Matt Skiba of Alkaline Trio on guitar, and the lineup has already started playing shows. "Does part of me get bummed? Totally," DeLonge says. "I love those guys, but I don't want the legacy of the band to get fucked with." Still, he says, he's not closing the door on playing with them again. "I'm not opposed to it. I still would be interested, if people would just pick up the phone and call." (Confusingly, DeLonge gets in touch a few weeks later saying, "I am currently in the band." He maintains that he has never officially quit or been fired.)

DeLonge lives on a pristine, palm-tree-lined street in an upscale beach town outside San Diego, in a Fifties-style ranch home full of futuristic touches, like art-deco swivel chairs painted with tiny UFOs. Jennifer, his wife of 15 years, greets him at the door along with his two big dogs, Luna

and Henrey. Inside, his son, Jonas Rocket, 9, is playing a *Star Wars* video game in pajamas. Daughter Ava Elizabeth, 13, is at school. As a dad, DeLonge can be strict; he polices the kids' Internet privileges to make sure they can't access Blink-182's raunchier catalog.

DeLonge grew up in a working-class family 30 minutes away from the beach. He has trouble relating to some of his affluent neighbors and mostly hangs out with his high school skating friends. "I had an exercise shirt on the other day," he says. "You should have seen the amount of shit I was given for looking like the ultimate yuppie."

DeLonge gets behind the wheel of an electric golf cart and drives to his favorite Italian restaurant, overlooking the beach. He's in a nostalgic mood, routinely drifting back to his old band's glory days. He remembers the pranks Blink pulled on other bands – dropping the curtains on openers Fall Out Boy mid-set, or the time Hoppus went into the Goo Goo Dolls' dressing room naked looking for his towel.

"I keep talking about Blink – we're not supposed to talk about Blink," he says. After lunch, we walk along the beach, passing the bench where DeLonge likes to sit for hours watching surfers and writing. At night, after working at To the Stars, he'll play board games with Jonas or lie on his porch playing guitar under the stars. "Quality of life comes first here," he says. "Music is secondary. I take my kids to school, I pick them up. I'm not traveling and missing baseball games."

"It's incredible when you're playing 'All the Small Things' in front of 100,000 people with lasers and shit. But it's difficult to grow when you're doing the same thing over and over. All I care about is, 'Am I happy? Am I around people who love me?' I'm doing too much cool stuff here to stop."

DeLonge isn't closing the door on Blink: "I still would be interested, if people would just pick up the phone."

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McCartney and
Lennon, 1961

The Deepest Dive Yet Into the Life of Sir Paul

Beatles biographer Philip Norman delivers a McCartney history that's sometimes meticulous to a fault

THE BEATLES MUST BE THE most chronicled musical act in history, as Philip Norman well knows: His outstanding *Shout!*, published in 1981, was among the first serious rock-band biographies, and his massive *John Lennon: The Life*, from 2008, may be the most comprehensive book on its subject. Its new companion bio, *Paul McCartney: The Life*, mirrors that achievement over 800-plus pages with meticulous detail. Norman traces Macca's family tree back to the 1800s. We see the wallpaper patterns in his childhood home, and the Bakelite headphones Jim McCartney wired through the floorboards so Paul could listen to the living-room radio console from his upstairs bedroom. You can even smell the sweat, rat shit and basement mold in the Cavern Club.

In the late Seventies, around the time McCartney released his sentimental waltz "Mull of Kintyre" with Wings, Norman wrote a satirical poem regarding the musician's post-Beatles output in London's high-profile *Sunday Times Magazine*, addressing him with the lines "O, deified scouse with unmusical spouse/For the clichés and cloy you unload." Even Macca, who, to Norman's surprise, agreed to give him "tacit approval" without directly participating, apparent-



ly had to concede that the guy is a Beatles scholar to reckon with.

The Beatles' startlingly brief career is recounted expertly; Norman knows his facts, sometimes to a fault. But while his reporting on business arrangements and relationships can occasionally get thick, the mountains of data are generally

transformed into vivid storytelling.

There are no major new revelations here. The dirt on Macca's brief, contentious marriage to Heather Mills, however, will be news to many American readers – just a fraction of that British tabloid circus actually made it across the pond. Norman is an English newspaperman at heart, and he shovels it over dozens of pages, suggesting he may still have an ax to grind. The backstory on recent McCartney LPs like *New* and *Kisses on the Bottom*, meanwhile – not to mention collaborations with Kanye West, Rihanna and the surviving Nirvana members – are granted just three paragraphs. In his seventies, Sir Paul is still outpacing those trying to tell his story. Nevertheless, Norman gets as close as anyone has yet.

WILL HERMES

Exploring the Myth of a Haunted Rock & Roll Wild Man

Screamin' Jay Hawkins' 1956 R&B classic "I Put a Spell on You" still stands as one of rock & roll's spookiest-sounding hits, recorded by a performer who opened his show by being brought onstage in a coffin. Hawkins' private life was just as



colorful – among other tales, he boasted that he had fathered dozens of children. While many of his boasts were half-truths at best, author (and *Rolling Stone* contributing editor) Mark Binelli decided to treat them as fact in *Screamin' Jay Hawkins' All-Time Greatest Hits*, a novel based on the mercurial singer's life. "My mantra became, 'What if it were all true?'" says Binelli. "I wanted to take this sort of cartoonish figure and turn him around a little bit, assume he had lots of depth, and see where it goes."

Binelli's book is half-biography, half-fiction, and its best parts combine both into impressionistic imaginings of Hawkins' bizarre life, adding emotional complexity to the shock-rock cult-fave. The story follows Jalacy Hawkins' life from his Cleveland youth to his World War II service (which he claimed he lied his way into), to fleeting success and a long decline. Binelli builds on real events, such as Hawkins' Fifties R&B package tours, and imagines some events of his own, including a meeting with Elvis, who quizzes Hawkins about black magic. One scene, inspired by a real-life gathering of more than a dozen of Hawkins' children after his death in 2000, imagines the pain and confusion their father inflicted.

Hawkins never had another U.S. hit like "I Put a Spell on You," and he spent time in prison after being found with a 15-year-old girl (and drugs) in a hotel room. In his final years, he drank heavily and churned through wives, resentful of his lauded rock & roll peers. But Binelli makes him sympathetic. As Hawkins told an interviewer, "I wish I could be who I was before I was me."

PATRICK DOYLE



Casting
a spell:
Hawkins



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ONE OF THE MANY EXCELLENT things about being Skrillex is that you can rehearse for your Coachella performance in a hotel room. Just a few days before the festival, he and Diplo – who will perform together as Jack Ü – are still figuring out most of their set, which will end up being a highlight of the weekend, complete with a Kanye West guest spot. “If you work until the last moment,” says Skrillex, 28, “you have the best show ever.” For Skrillex, the last couple of years have been adventurous ones, as he put aside the skronky dubstep that made him famous in favor of Jack Ü’s populist bombast and an unlikely turn as a hitmaking producer for Justin Bieber. “You just gotta go on with that feeling of inspiration,” Skrillex says. “And a lot of times you end up somewhere you don’t ever expect to be.”

Doesn’t Justin Bieber seem like the kind of kid who might have tried to beat you up in high school?

I was a different kid, and, sure, I was harassed a little. But it wasn’t like I was a little bitch. I’d fight back! Well, I did say “tried.”

I’ve always been just chameleoning around, just hanging out with different people. The hip-hop kids, the rock kids, the skaters and jocks and whoever else. I had fun with everybody. **Deadmau5 claimed that you allowed yourself to be “used as a goddamn tool” by Biebs.**

If he was a real friend, he would come to me and be like, “Yo, you shouldn’t be working for Justin Bieber,” rather than blowing it up all over the Internet and going out of his way to make people feel wrong for making a choice in their life. And I would say to him, “I enjoy working with Justin Bieber!” I’m a fan of his voice. And if you’re a producer and you get an opportunity to work with someone who’s the biggest artist in the world – for better or for worse – what would you say? Would you say no? **How does your Jack Ü collaboration with Diplo work?**

It changes every single day. In general, we like to take a piano or guitar and write something simple with a singer or songwriter, and then we’ll come together and figure out the production later. The idea is taking pop songs and doing something really unexpected with production and sound. **You’ve been working with rappers lately, including Rick Ross on a song for *Suicide Squad*. What hip-hop producers do you admire?**

Q&A



Skrillex

The producer on the future of EDM, his next album, and why he was psyched to work with Justin Bieber

BY BRIAN HIATT

Timbaland is still one of my favorite producers ever, with his drums. He inspired me growing up. And the diversity of the people who he’s worked with, from fuckin’ Björk to Justin Timberlake, and even that record from what’s his name, from Audioslave.

Chris Cornell! A lot of people think that record is garbage, though.

But it’s so much better that he made a garbage record than no record. I respect any artist for trying shit.

You started in emo. What would it take to get you excited about a rock act now?

Music’s gotta be dangerous, and that’s what I feel like rock has lacked. The most dangerous music right now is electronic music and hip-hop. The best artists take limited resources and create the most out of them, and that’s what people are doing with computers and samplers. It’s like, “We don’t have enough money to get a whole studio and a whole band, so we just do the shit ourselves in our bedrooms.” But the kids are going to inevitably start punk bands again. It’s going to happen. **There’s a lot of talk about an “EDM bubble” that might be bursting, but clearly electronic music isn’t going anywhere.**

A lot of people who ask about the state of EDM don’t know what they’re asking. Are you asking me how long people are going to make EDM? Like what David Guetta’s making? Avicii? Or are you asking how long people are going to make computer music? Because people won’t stop making music on the computer until computers go away. But as far as a certain culture and aspect of EDM, yeah, I do believe that it will go away, because the ratio of businesspeople is trumping the ratio of actual artistry.

What are your plans for your next album as Skrillex?

It doesn’t have to be an album anymore. It’s good to re-evaluate and start from the ground up of what it means to make music and what it means to release music. Every three years or so, I kinda step back for a second and wait for a bite of inspiration to throw me in the next direction. I’m just taking my time.

Do you have a sense of where it’s going sonically?

I have a lot of awesome ideas, I just don’t want to give too many away. If someone else does it first, then I’ll have to think of something else, you know?

Can you just hum one for me?

[Laughs, hums supermelodic riff] That’s a fuckin’ hit right there!

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CRISPY SATISFACTION

The New Faces of Late Night

How Samantha Bee, James Corden and other hosts are reinventing the talk show

BY ROB SHEFFIELD

A YEAR AFTER DAVID LETTERMAN quit, late-night TV is in flux like never before. Following decades of stagnation, the after-hours landscape looks drastically different from how it looked in 2015 – and, no doubt, how it will look this time next year. It's been just over two years since Jimmy Fallon took over from Jay Leno on *The Tonight Show*, and since then we've witnessed a multicouch pileup. Exit Letterman from *The Late Show*; enter Stephen Colbert. Farewell, Craig Ferguson, on *The Late Late Show*; welcome, James Corden. Adieu, *The Daily Show*'s Jon Stewart; welcome, Samantha Bee – oh, wait, no, Trevor Noah got that gig, for some reason. It's a massive generational shift for late night, and we're only starting to see the results. But Bee's spectacular rookie season on *Full Frontal* is the best thing to happen to late-night TV since microwave pizza rolls. Her legend-making moment came early, the night she ripped into Sen. Mitch McConnell for his vow that Republicans would block any Supreme Court appointment. "OK, fine, fuck this stupid thing," Bee fumed. "Let's just have a Supreme Court vacancy for a year because some chinless dildo wants a justice who will use his gavel to plug up your abortion hole."

With those tender words, Bee served notice that it's a new era in late night. Back in the Leno-versus-Letterman days, it was two giants doing two philosophically different versions of the same show, with the same format and the same guests. But in 2016, with clips going viral, you can sample peak bits à la carte – you can watch Fallon's Lip Sync Battle segments without sitting through his still-ering-y celebrity interviews. There was always a "captive audience" element in the late-show premise – as Leno famously said, "To me, the key to *The Tonight Show* is, you're at the airport and, 'Oh, look, it's on the TV over the



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The Rookies

(1) James Corden and Adele do Kanye karaoke; (2) Samantha Bee lost out on *The Daily Show* but now hosts *Full Frontal*; (3) Stephen Colbert is still struggling to find his way: It's a massive generational shift for late night.

bar.” That’s not an audience you can build a franchise on anymore, because #phones #got #invented, and these hosts know it – they

have to work harder to reach an increasingly fickle crowd of insomniacs, most of whom are now procrastinating at work the next day. If the late-night set does something worth your time to watch, it’ll find you.

The hosts who are winning the new late-night game understand this principle. Bee has gotten it from Night One – her debut season has been a sensation, bringing her no-bullshit personality to weekly rants and field reports. She was always great on *The Daily Show*, but her new freedom has in-

spired her to new heights, as with her fellow *Daily* alumnus John Oliver as he slices up Donald Trump. In retrospect, it was the rise of Oliver on *Last Week Tonight* that blew up *The Daily Show*'s spot. Oliver's decision to go weekly looks more and more prescient – it punctured Stewart's mojo and sent him fleeing to HBO, where his former pet Brit was out-*Daily*-ing him every week.

Corden has a completely different personality – chummy, vulnerable, ego-free – but he gives the sense that it's all him, which is why he's earned so much goodwill so fast. He's always determined to be less edgy than his guests, which means he can make them look cooler and funnier than they really are. That's what's made his Carpool Karaoke routine an instant classic. Belting in the car with Corden can make an uptight micromanaged celeb like Jennifer Lopez look spontaneous, especially since he's genuinely trying to sing rather than just crack her up. With a more freewheeling personality, the segment can turn into a rampage, like the solid-gold moment when Corden started rapping Kanye West's "Monster" and Adele came in with the Nicki Minaj verse.

As for the old-money Big Three cruise ships, they're still afloat. NBC's Fallon and Seth Meyers own the ratings in their time slots; even their reruns beat the competition. Jimmy Kimmel and [Cont. on 26]

FROM TOP: CBS; PETER YANG/TBS; JOHN PAUL FILO/CBS



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[Cont. from 24] Colbert are neck and neck for second place. Yet Colbert, the newest host in this group, is still finding his feet after a year, which seems strange – he's continuing to tinker with his new role as he figures out how to make use of his appealing sincere side. The funniest moments come when he lets himself slide back into his comfort zone as a brazen political satirist. Colbert the Real Guy is still learning how to live with Colbert the Zany

how he ended up hosting this year's White House Correspondents' Dinner.

The Daily Show's decision to let Bee slip away looked nuts at the time, and does not look significantly less nuts now. Sad to say, Noah has not gotten better, despite a presidential election that should be God's gift to political jokers. It's a reminder that Stewart made his bones on the program with the most tedious campaign in history: the 2000 "Gush versus Bore"

snoozefest, which didn't become a horrifying melodrama until election night. If Stewart could spend his rookie year squeezing humor out of boredom like that, it's baffling Noah can't seem to get more friction going with this crazy cast of characters, but friction isn't his thing. Noah can't fake the personal anger of Bee or Wilmore, or the detached concern of Oliver, and while he's wise not to simulate emotions he doesn't feel, he makes it look like he's only discussing politics because that's the assignment his teacher gave him. He gives the impression he'd much rather trade jobs with Fallon. And it brings out the blah in him. It's strange because barely over a year ago, the whole *Daily* franchise seemed like a sure thing.

But if anything's clear in the late-night scene of 2016, there are no sure things, because the game is mutating too fast. Long

gone are the days when Johnny Carson's America drank itself to sleep in front of monologues. Now that we're sampling from the menus of different shows after they air, according to our own whims and on our own schedules, the pressure on hosts to generate buzz in an overcrowded field of contenders is causing them to up the ante on an increasingly regular basis. A concentrated blast of brilliance now makes more impact than endless hours of amiable plodding. When Oliver rewrote the rules with *Last Week Tonight*, he made it clear right in the self-mocking title he wasn't aspiring to be early or even timely about the news – instead, he was taking the time to do longer in-depth reports that remained fresh and watchable for days or even weeks to come. What a concept. Clearly, the competition was tuning in and taking notes. And suddenly, the most sluggish and complacent of TV formats is getting forced to innovate just to keep up with its audience – which can only mean it's going to get more exciting.

Trevor Noah stumbles on *The Daily Show*.

Long gone are the days when Johnny Carson's America drank itself to sleep in front of monologues. Now, hosts are pressured to create buzz.

Fictional Character, and they're occasionally elbowing each other for room. You can see it pains the guy that he pulled the plug on *The Colbert Report* right before this election turned into the godless killing machine of his former persona's wildest dreams. When Colbert talks about politics now, he looks like a man who used all his willpower struggling to go gluten-free, then moved next door to a donut shop.

Larry Wilmore took some time to build up steam on *The Nightly Show* after his debut last year – he's so reluctant to seem slick or jokey that he initially looked like an awkward fit. He isn't always funny, but he's got a mean moral earnestness that ensures he isn't ever bland – especially his January rant about the Flint water-poisoning crisis. "This is what small government looks like," Wilmore fumed. "Officials in Flint, Michigan, should all be rounded up and put behind bars. If you need extra lead for those bars, just hold a town blood drive." Like his fellow *Daily* vets Bee and Oliver, Wilmore can't help showing up the mothership franchise on a regular basis, which might be

The WATCH LIST

The good, the bad and the deeply disturbing

HOT



▲ **Hugh Laurie** in *The Night Manager*: the most watchable bad guy on TV.



▼ **Maisie Williams** as the blind badass Arya on *Game of Thrones*.

▼ **Andrew Dice Clay** goes the Louis C.K. route in his new Showtime series.

▲ **Elvis' grandkid Riley Keough** as a high-end escort in *The Girlfriend Experience*.

▶ **Heartbeat:** A *Grey's Anatomy* clone about a sassy surgeon looking for love.



▼ **Fear the Walking Dead** keeps sleepwalking. Which is worse: getting eaten by zombies or dying of boredom?

◀ **Jenna (Real World 31)** is the most openly racist cast member ever.

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RandomNotes

Coachella Dreamin'

EDM hitmaker Calvin Harris' headlining set at Coachella was the weekend's biggest superstar throwdown. Rihanna joined him to perform their 2011 hit, "We Found Love," while girlfriend Taylor Swift led a squad singalong with Haim. At a party offstage, RiRi and Leonardo DiCaprio got down to TLC's "No Scrubs."



FAMILY AFFAIR

"Tenth Coachella! LOL!" said Danielle Haim (middle, between sisters Este and Alana). The band is hard at work on its second album.

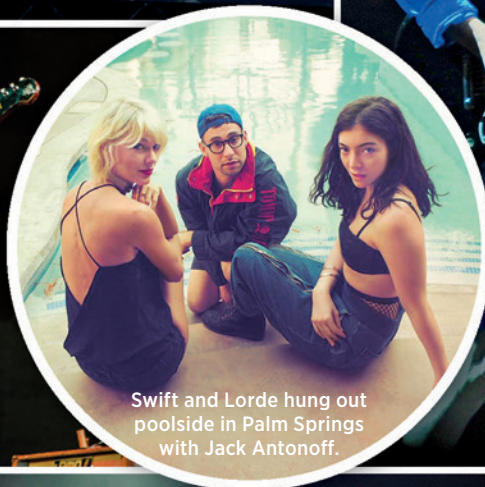


SHOOT TO THRILL

Angus Young got in some prep work with his band's new singer, Axl Rose, backing up Guns n' Roses on "Whole Lotta Rosie." Axl will join AC/DC on tour this summer.



HELLO, AKRON! Dan Auerbach shredded with heroes Joe Walsh and Glenn Schwartz of the James Gang. "Three Ohio boys on the big Coachella stage!" said Auerbach.



Swift and Lorde hung out poolside in Palm Springs with Jack Antonoff.

California Love

Ice Cube reunited with former N.W.A bandmates DJ Yella and MC Ren for a hits medley at the first weekend of Coachella. But Cube had an even bigger surprise for Weekend Two. "Is there a doctor in the house?" he asked, as Dr. Dre took the stage. "It was an incredible feeling to perform again with my brothers," says Cube.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: MARK DAVIS/GETTY IMAGES FOR COACHELLA; NEIL RASMUS/BFA/REX SHUTTERSTOCK; XPOSURE/AM-GSI; TAYLOR SWIFT/INSTAGRAM; KEVIN WINTER/GETTY IMAGES FOR COACHELLA; ANDY KEILAN

CRACKED ACTOR

James Franco celebrated his 38th birthday the way any perfectly normal full-grown man would: by dressing up like David Bowie and going to Disneyland. "It's sort of how I've been trained," Franco says. "Stay mysterious... don't let people know who you are."



LET'S SPEND OUR LIFE TOGETHER Mick Jagger and Jerry Hall's son James (co-star of HBO's *Vinyl*) married his girlfriend of seven years, Anoushka Sharma, at a ceremony in the English countryside.

Sweet Ride of Mine

Axl Rose (who is still recovering from a fractured foot) gave his temporary wheels a spin around LAX, days after performing with Guns n' Roses at Coachella. Rose chatted with reporters about "the amazing Coachella crowd" and Prince's passing. "It's very sad," he said. "I'm a big Prince fan."



Back in the New York Groove

Fresh off scoring a writing credit on Beyoncé's *Lemonade*, the Yeah Yeah Yeahs played their first show in a year and a half, at a Tribeca Film Festival party for a new documentary about photographer Mick Rock. "Back in the saddle!" said Karen O.



THE ODD COUPLE

Eighties rock peers Jon Bon Jovi and Michael Stipe sat together at the Food Bank of New York City's Can Do Awards. "We discussed the working hungry of New York City, along with Prince and the state of the music industry at the moment," said Stipe, who recently started performing again.

GOD SQUAD Kanye West was among the stars who said goodbye to Kobe Bryant, whom he called "the God," at his final game. West even wore an "I Feel Like Kobe" shirt he designed for his Yeezy clothing line.



THE WAR ON DRUGS

After 45 years, more than \$1 trillion wasted, and the creation of the world's largest prison system, America still lacks the political will to change its failed drug policy

★ By Tim Dickinson ★

IN MARCH, THE COMMANDER IN chief of the War on Drugs stood in front of a crowd of policymakers, advocates and recovering addicts to declare that America has been doing it wrong.

Speaking at the National Prescription Drug Abuse and Heroin Summit in Atlanta – focused on an overdose epidemic now killing some 30,000 Americans a year – President Barack Obama declared, “For too long we have viewed the problem of drug abuse...through the lens of the criminal justice system,” creating grave costs: “We end up with jails full of folks who can’t function when they get out. We end up with people’s lives being shattered.”

Touting a plan to increase drug-treatment spending by more than \$1 billion – the capstone to the administration’s effort to double the federal drug-treatment budget – Obama insisted, “This is a straightforward proposition: How do we save lives once people are addicted, so that they have a chance to recover? It doesn’t do us much good to talk about recovery after folks are dead.”

Obama’s speech underscored tactical and rhetorical shifts in the prosecution of the War on Drugs – the first durable course corrections in this failed 45-year war. The administration has enshrined three crucial policy reforms. First, health insurers must now cover drug treatment as a requirement of Obamacare. Second, draconian drug sentences have been scaled back, helping to reduce the number of federal drug prisoners by more than

15 percent. Third, over the screams of prohibitionists in its ranks, the White House is allowing marijuana’s march out of the black market, with legalization expected to reach California and beyond in November.

The administration’s change in rhetoric has been even more sweeping: Responding to opioid deaths, Obama appointed a new drug czar, Michael Botticelli, who previously ran point on drug treatment in Massachusetts. Botticelli has condemned the “failed policies and failed practices”

of past drug czars, and refers not to heroin in “junkies” or “addicts” but to Americans with “opioid-abuse disorders.”

“One of the biggest reasons why people don’t seek care is shame and stigma,” Botticelli told reporters last year. “What we’ve been trying to do is change the language.”

Despite strides toward a more sane national drug policy, the deeper infrastructure of the War on Drugs remains fundamentally unaltered under Obama. Work focused on public health has not replaced

paramilitary anti-trafficking efforts, known as interdiction, at home or abroad. Rather – much like an “all of the above” energy strategy that embraces solar while continuing to remove mountaintops in pursuit of coal – the new policies supplement the old.

As a result, the Drug War is costing taxpayers more than ever. Obama’s 2017 drug budget seeks \$31 billion, an increase of 25 percent from when he took office. This year, the federal government is spending more than \$1,100 per person to combat the habit of America’s 27 million illicit-drug users, and 22 million of them use marijuana.

The blinkered drug-warrior culture in the ranks of the departments of Justice, State and Defense remains similarly entrenched. The acting chief of the Drug Enforcement Agency calls medical marijuana “a joke.” The State Department’s top drug official insists, “Our objective remains...eliminating the use of marijuana in the United States.” With pot, such knee-jerk commitment to prohibition might be amusing. With harder drugs, it

EDITORIAL

STOP THE WAR NOW

By Ethan Nadelmann

Executive Director of the Drug Policy Alliance

MORE THAN \$1 TRILLION DOWN THE DRAIN – FOR nothing! Tens of millions arrested, many millions incarcerated and countless families and communities savaged by stupid prohibitionist policies. And that’s just in the United States. ¶ Hundreds of thousands dead in drug wars from Asia to the Americas. Terrorists funded by drug money. Prisons packed. Gangs empowered. Governments intimidated and corrupted. It’s like alcohol prohibition and Al Capone, times 50. ¶ And all for what? The Drug War doesn’t make us safer, or healthier. Its only real beneficiaries are those who figure out how to make money selling drugs and the drug-prohibition industrial complex. ¶ Ending a war requires guts and leadership. President Obama has shown promise of late but no real commitment. Many Republicans say that fewer Americans should be locked up, but you’d never know from looking at Congress that they’re the party of more freedom and less government. We need leaders who will actually lead. President Obama missed a big opportunity last month when the U.N. convened on drug policy. He could have told the world that the United States was turning its back on its failed prohibitionist policies and would lead the way in forging a new global drug policy grounded in the best of what America stands for, not the worst. But the status quo prevailed. ¶ So now it’s up to We, the People, to lead – by voting on Election Day to legalize marijuana and roll back the Drug War. By calling out and defeating Drug War apologists. And by backing those willing to fight for sanity and freedom.



has deadly ramifications. At home, the administration's early crackdown on prescription opioids helped drive the current spike in heroin deaths. South of the border, cartel violence rages unabated, despite the recapture of Mexico's most notorious drug lord; the country's homicide rate in February spiked to 55 murders a day.

The futility of the greater Drug War was laid bare in recent Senate testimony by top admirals charged with combating global narcotraffic. They confessed they had no solution to halt the flow of heroin from Mexico; admitted global drug suppliers would invariably service U.S. demand; and pressed the government to steel itself for a 30-year nation-building effort in drug-ravaged Mexico and Central America.

Sen. Bill Nelson (D-Florida), the senior member of the Armed Services Committee, sought to put a rosy spin on proceedings. "At least we got El Chapo," he said. "So that was a step in the right direction."

FORTY-FIVE YEARS ON, AMERICA is still grappling with the dark origins of the Drug War, launched in 1971 by President Richard Nixon – for political purposes.

Nixon's domestic-policy adviser, John Ehrlichman, in an interview published posthumously in *Harper's* this year, revealed the true aim of the Drug War was to criminalize the administration's "two enemies: the anti-war left and black people." As Ehrlichman explained, "We could arrest their leaders, raid their homes, break up their meetings and vilify them night after night on the evening news."

Nixon himself wove anti-Semitism into the mix. "Every one of the bastards that are out for legalizing marijuana is Jewish," Nixon grouched to his chief of staff, Bob Haldeman, in a conversation recorded in the Oval Office in May 1971. "What the Christ is the matter with the Jews, Bob?" Nixon asked. "By God, we are going to hit

the marijuana thing, and I want to hit it right square in the puss."

More than \$1 trillion later, Nixon's war has hollowed out urban black communities, visited death upon downtrodden whites in rural America and unleashed horrific violence from Bogotá to Ciudad Juárez. In Mexico, since 2007, as many as 80,000 civilians have been murdered in drug violence. Despite the carnage, prohibitionist policies enforced through military interdiction and domestic incarceration have done little to curb the American drug habit – which fuels \$64 billion a year in cartel profits, according to an estimate by the Treasury Department.

America remains the world's top consumer of illicit drugs. The government's National Survey on Drug Use and Health from 2015 found nearly one in 10 Americans over the age of 12 had used an illicit drug in the previous month. The surge in Drug War spending notwithstanding,

American drug use is up modestly – the highest since 2002.

By the government's own metrics, the Drug War is failing. In December, the Government Accountability Office published a report titled "Office of National Drug Control Policy: Lack of Progress on Achieving National Strategy Goals." GAO found that "none of the goals" of the Obama drug strategy have been met, and significant progress can be seen only in a slight reduction in drug use among teens.

OBAMA'S DRUG WAR LEADERSHIP has been uneven, an evaluation shared by drug warriors and reformers alike. Beyond big-picture objectives – softening mandatory

ried over George W. Bush's DEA chief, Michele Leonhart, who would refuse to admit, under House grilling in 2012, that marijuana is a less dangerous drug than crack cocaine.

Obama's inattention also sparked infighting among reformers and hard-liners in the policy ranks – explaining the whip-saw treatment of medical marijuana during Obama's first term. A 2009 Justice Department memo, interpreted in the states as a green light for commercial-scale medical marijuana, was unceremoniously revoked in 2011 – after rearguard action by career drug warriors, including Sabet: "I pushed very hard behind the scenes to get a clarifying memo in 2011, saying, 'Oh, wait a minute, you guys took it the wrong

A study in contrasts from his cop predecessor, Botticelli is the first drug czar with experience in recovery: He's an alcoholic 27 years sober. And as the former head of treatment services in Massachusetts, he pioneered the deployment of overdose-reversal drugs to police on the front lines of the opioid crisis.

"There's a reason why my drug czar is somebody who came not from the criminal justice side but came really from the treatment side," Obama told the crowd at the Atlanta heroin summit. "The only way that we reduce demand is if we're... thinking about this as a public-health problem.

"It is so much more expensive," Obama said, "for us not to... do the right thing on the front end."

“THE DRUG WAR COSTS US MORE THAN EVER: OBAMA'S FINAL DRUG BUDGET SEEKS \$31 BILLION, AN INCREASE OF MORE THAN 25 PERCENT FROM WHEN HE TOOK OFFICE.”

minimums, ensuring drug treatment and avoiding a firestorm over marijuana – the first six-plus years of the administration were marked by the president's lack of interest in the nuts and bolts of the Drug War. "I don't think it's controversial by any stretch of the imagination to say that drug policy was not a priority," says Kevin Sabet, a senior adviser in Obama's ONDCP from 2009 to 2011.

The administration's previous drug czar, gruff former Seattle police chief Gil Kerlikowske, reported to Vice President Joe Biden, who had made his bones as one of the Senate's top drug warriors. Obama did not even introduce the National Drug Strategy in 2010. "This was the president's drug strategy," laments one of its drafters, "and there just wasn't interest."

As a result, much of the Drug War continued on a glide path. Obama even car-

ried over George W. Bush's DEA chief, Michele Leonhart, who would refuse to admit, under House grilling in 2012, that marijuana is a less dangerous drug than crack cocaine.

Even the historic decision to condone pot legalization in Colorado and Washington in 2013, insiders say, reflected a White House desire to sidestep a political fight, rather than to provide bold leadership. Sabet calls the legalization decision "Obama's 'don't ask, don't tell'" – a reference to the clumsy compromise under President Clinton to allow gays to serve in the military, provided they stayed in the closet.

Only recently, confronted by a deadly spike in heroin overdoses nationwide, has Obama taken a hands-on approach to drug policy. Kerlikowske took a new position as the head of customs enforcement, and was replaced at ONDCP by his deputy Botticelli.

THAT IS A LESSON THE WHITE House learned at high cost. The administration's first effort to crack down on opioids – focusing on Rx pills – contributed to the deadliness of today's epidemic.

During the George W. Bush presidency, the death toll from prescription-opioid abuse, driven by easy access to drugs like OxyContin, tripled – approaching 15,000 in 2008. As Kerlikowske took the reins at ONDCP in 2009, he was determined to reduce the supply of painkillers available for abuse. "People were dying from OxyContin. We had to do something," Sabet recalls, to stop "the carnage."

The crackdown included a DEA campaign to shutter pill mills in states like Florida, where unscrupulous doctors liberally supplied opioids to addicted patients. The feds ratcheted up prescription mon-

FROM LEFT: AERO AMERICAN NEWSPAPERS/GADO/GETTY IMAGES; U.S. TREASURY, DIGITALLY ALTERED BY "ROLLING STONE"; AVANIDA VOISARD/UN PHOTO; CHRISTIAN PETERSEN/GETTY IMAGES; AP IMAGES; JOAN MARCUS; SAUL LOEB/APP/GETTY IMAGES; SOLAR IMPULSE; MAT HAYWARD/GETTY IMAGES

THREAT ASSESSMENT THE GOOD THE BAD AND THE SCARY



WITH US

Harriet Tubman bumps Andrew Jackson to the back of the \$20.

175 countries sign **Paris climate** accord on Earth Day.

Court reinstates **Deflate-gate** suspension.

Judge allows lawsuit against architects of **CIA interrogation program** to proceed.

Hamilton earns a Pulitzer.

Virginia restores voting rights to 200,000 ex-cons.

Solar plane crosses Pacific.

Springsteen, Pearl Jam cancel North Carolina shows to protest state's **transphobic** law.

itoring to stop patients from stockpiling pills from multiple providers. The administration also forced drug companies to introduce abuse-resistant reformulations of drugs like OxyContin and Opana so they couldn't be crushed and snorted.

These reforms showed early promise – slowing the rise in prescription-overdose deaths. But the administration failed to plan for the unintended consequences of restricting the prescription-drug supply: Americans desperate for a fix would turn to heroin instead. “No one considered the fact that these people aren't going to go away,” says Theodore J. Cicero, a top academic opioid researcher at Washington University in St. Louis. “You make their drug harder to get, they don't just stop taking drugs. That's a very naive assumption. They switch to something else. Heroin has turned out to be a very inexpensive, readily accessible alternative.”

The consequences of that switch turned out to be deadly. And the overdose epidemic is now deadlier still because dealers often cut heroin with fentanyl, a fast-acting synthetic drug up to 40 times as powerful as heroin itself. “From a public-health perspective, we've gone in a reverse direction,” says Cicero. “We've generated a big problem from opiate-overdose deaths because we're shifting people into heroin.” Today, about 75 percent of heroin users are former prescription-drug users.

The data tells the story: Heroin-overdose deaths surged, more than tripling from 2009, rising to 10,500 in 2014, driving an “epidemic,” according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. “More

persons died from drug overdoses in the United States in 2014,” the agency reports, “than during any previous year on record.” After a short plateau, prescription ODs have also spiked again, to nearly 19,000. The 30,000 combined opioid deaths now rival the carnage from car crashes (33,804) and gunshots (33,636).

past were...stereotypically identified as poor, minority, and as a consequence, the thinking was it is often a character flaw in those individuals...and it's not our problem they're just being locked up. And I think that one of the things that's changed in this opioid debate is a recognition that this reaches everybody.”

The severity of the epidemic has worn down historic Republican resistance to public-health-driven drug policy. In the 2016 federal budget, Republicans lifted a decades-long prohibition on most of the federal funding for needle exchanges.

On a conference call with reporters in March, Botticelli praised such programs as being “a great intervention point for out-of-treatment injection-drug users.” Answering a question from ROLLING STONE, Botticelli even expressed openness to safe-injection sites – now being considered in cities from San Francisco to Ithaca, New York – where opioid users can shoot up under medical supervision, often with prescription-grade heroin.

“We haven't taken a formal position on safe-injection sites,” Botticelli says. This is

a startling about-face from past ONDCP pronouncements. Bush drug czar John Walters blasted safe injection as “state-sponsored suicide”; Kerlikowske has called these programs “a failure.”

Botticelli continued: “Taking a close look at these programs becomes very important for us – not only in terms of reducing overdose and infectious disease, but also how these programs might or might not [be] an entryway into treatment. It



BROKEN SYSTEM
Above: Police raid an opioid pill mill in Tampa, 2010. Left: Inmates at a state prison in Lancaster, California, that was operating at more than twice its capacity.

Drug stats in America skew by race. But unlike arrests and incarceration, overdose deaths hit whites at nearly twice the rate of black Americans and three times the rate of Hispanics. Obama is now using this fact to push for a culture shift. “I'm going to be blunt,” he said in Atlanta. “Part of what has made it previously difficult to emphasize treatment over the criminal justice system has to do with the fact that the populations affected in the



AGAINST US

Female Ted Cruz
doppelgänger to do porn.

Army destroys Humvees
in failed airdrop.

U.S. suicide rate
increases 24 percent since 1999.

Hershey
to sell meat bars.

Benghazi probe
now longer than 9/11 Commission, Watergate investigation.

Built section of Keystone pipeline
leaks oil in South Dakota.

Support for Trump
from Republicans hits 50 percent for the first time.

Massive coral bleaching
hits 93 percent of Great Barrier Reef.

will be very interesting to see how these programs develop over the years.”

THE ADMINISTRATION’S INCREASINGLY enlightened approach to opioid addiction stands at odds with its confounding approach to a drug at the other end of the harm spectrum, marijuana.

Pot is far and away America’s illicit drug of choice, with 22.2 million users. (Texas, by comparison, has 27 million residents.) Marijuana use is increasing modestly – driven by a surge of adult use during the Obama years.

The administration’s hands-off approach to state legalization has broken the Berlin Wall of prohibition. Recreational pot is now legal in Alaska, Washington, Oregon, Colorado and the District of Columbia. And, not surprisingly, marijuana is a boom business: Colorado pot sales topped \$1 billion last year, producing \$135 million in tax revenue, including \$35 million for school construction. The research firms Arcview and New Frontier project that the national legal

William Brownfield declared, “Our objective remains that of limiting and eventually eliminating the use of marijuana in the United States of America because of its harm and its dangers.”

Although he touts “evidence-based” drug policy, Botticelli cites risks to young users to advocate for pot prohibition. This is a phantom menace. State legalization is not creating a generation of underage pot-heads: Marijuana use is flat among 12- to 17-year-olds, nationally, and there has been no spike in teen usage in legal states.

Michele Leonhart, the holdover DEA administrator, was finally pushed out in 2015 in the wake of a sex scandal in her ranks. (An inspector general discovered that DEA agents attended cartel-affiliated sex parties with prostitutes in Colombia, but had received no more than 10 days suspension.) The acting director, Chuck Rosenberg, is no reformer. A former senior FBI official tapped by Attorney General Loretta Lynch, Rosenberg insists pot is “bad” and “dangerous” and told reporters in November, “Don’t call it medicine – that is a joke.”

The drop in federal busts is sharper, in fact, than the decline in marijuana arrests by local cops. According to the latest FBI figures, the feds arrested almost 620,000 Americans for pot possession in 2014 – down from a 2007 high of 775,000, but still comprising 40 percent of all drug arrests, and five percent of total arrests. Yet treating marijuana possession as a crime continues to disrupt lives and drain city budgets. As recently as 2010, states spent \$3.6 billion enforcing marijuana laws.

The unequal enforcement of pot laws also lays bare the racism latent in the American justice system. Despite roughly equal use rates, blacks are 3.7 times more likely to be arrested than whites. This pattern persists even in legalization states: Marijuana arrests have fallen 90 percent in pot-legal Washington, but blacks are still busted at twice the rate of whites.

ON ANY GIVEN DAY IN AMERICA, NEARLY 470,000 people are behind bars for drug offenses. That represents a fifth of the total incarcerated population of 2.2 million and

“IT’S STRAIGHTFORWARD: HOW DO WE SAVE LIVES SO THE ADDICTED CAN RECOVER? IT DOESN’T DO MUCH GOOD TO TALK ABOUT RECOVERY AFTER FOLKS ARE DEAD.”

market (recreational and medicinal) will be \$7.1 billion in 2016.

The American public has never been more pro-cannabis: According to an AP poll, a supermajority 61 percent favor legalization – including 47 percent of Republicans. And legalization is expected to advance on the 2016 ballot. In California, the campaign for the Adult Use of Marijuana Act is funded by Facebook billionaire Sean Parker and backed by Lt. Gov. Gavin Newsom, who says the Drug War is an “abject – and expensive – failure.” Legalization proponents also point to promising November ballot initiatives in Nevada and Arizona.

Vermont may move sooner to become the first state to legalize through the legislative process. “The War on Drugs has failed when it comes to marijuana prohibition,” Gov. Peter Shumlin told lawmakers in January, promoting a bill to tax and regulate recreational pot. “Vermont can take a smarter approach.”

Prohibition took another blow this year when Prime Minister Justin Trudeau took power in Canada after campaigning in part on a legalization platform. According to a lawmaker close to the effort, Canada is likely to implement a regime for legal marijuana by 2017.

In the face of this progress, however, federal policymakers are redoubling prohibition efforts. In March, assistant secretary of state for drugs and law enforcement

Now legal in 24 states and Washington, D.C., medical marijuana is scientifically effective as a treatment for nausea and nerve pain, and for symptoms of multiple sclerosis, epilepsy, Crohn’s disease and PTSD. It has also shown potential against diseases as serious as diabetes and cancer. On the House floor, Rep. Earl Blumenauer (D-Oregon) blasted Rosenberg as “an example of the inept, misinformed zealot who has mismanaged America’s failed policy of marijuana prohibition.” A paper by the Brookings Institution called out the administration for having “paralyzed science and threatened the integrity of research freedom” on medical marijuana.

There are hints, however, that the DEA is not fully impervious to the shifting reality on pot. In a first, the agency’s acting chief acknowledged that “heroin is clearly more dangerous than marijuana.” The DEA has also said it hopes to produce, by July, the results of a five-year review to determine whether pot should remain with heroin on the most restrictive drug schedule.

Federal enforcement for marijuana is also shifting: In 2010, the DEA seized nearly 726,000 kilograms of pot in domestic raids. By 2014, the latest data available, that fell to just 74,000. Domestic DEA pot arrests are also down sharply – from nearly 7,000 in 2010 to around 4,000 in 2014 – “due in part,” the agency explains, “to state-approved marijuana measures.”

the equivalent of every man, woman and child in Kansas City, Missouri. The United States remains the world’s largest jailer by a wide margin.

But the mass incarceration of drug users may have finally peaked. At the federal level, historic – though far from sweeping – drug-sentencing reforms have significantly reduced the population of drug prisoners. The Fair Sentencing Act, passed by Democrats in 2010, eliminated the federal mandatory minimum for crack possession and reduced the unjustifiable sentencing disparity for possessing powder versus crack cocaine – shaving an average of 2.5 years off sentences for more than 7,500 crack offenders.

Obama’s first attorney general, Eric Holder, championed a pair of similar measures to reduce drug sentences. In 2013, Holder instructed U.S. attorneys to not specify drug quantity in the prosecution of nonviolent offenders if doing so would trigger a mandatory minimum. Holder also embraced a reform called “drugs minus two,” which lowered the sentencing guidelines judges use for drug crimes by two degrees of severity across the board. Made retroactive in 2014, this reform spurred the early release of nearly 6,000 drug inmates at the end of 2015.

From a peak of 101,000 in 2012, the number of federal drug prisoners has dropped to 85,000 in March, according

to data obtained from the Federal Bureau of Prisons. Despite this progress, the federal government imprisons as many drug offenders as it did in 2003, during Bush's first term. And drug cases continue to clog the courts: 32 percent of the district-court caseload, with marijuana accounting for more than one in four drug cases.

States – red and blue alike – are also reducing their drug incarceration numbers, emboldened by low crime and the strapped budgets of the Great Recession. Forty states eased drug-sentencing laws between 2009 and 2013, according to Pew Research. Cumulatively, such reforms have driven a 20 percent reduction in drug imprisonment. From 2004 to 2014, the number of drug inmates held by states decreased by 60,000, according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, to 208,000. Of these, more than 160,000 are locked up for trafficking and other drug offenses, while more than 47,000 serve time for possession.

The third, and likely largest, population of American drug offenders is in jail – city and county lockups where people serve short sentences or await trial. Nearly a quarter of the roughly 744,000 Americans now in jail – 184,000, according to the Sentencing Project – are locked up for drugs.

Of all states, California is taking the most aggressive lead on jail reform. Prop 47, passed by voters in 2014, downgraded most personal-use offenses to misdemeanors. Rather than being jailed to await trial, drug users are now typically cited and released. According to research by the Public Policy Institute of California, jail bookings for possession charges have fallen by 68 percent.

FOR TAXPAYERS, THE DRUG WAR imposes huge costs: nearly \$55 billion a year. Harvard economist Jeffrey Miron, in a study published by CATO in 2010, found state enforcement of drug prohibition – accounting for cops, judges, jails and prisons – costs more than \$25 billion a year, with more than \$5 billion spent fighting pot.

Federal Drug War spending has now topped \$30 billion. ONDCP divides its spending in two buckets: one for “supply reduction” (global interdiction and law enforcement) and the other for “demand reduction” (prevention and treatment). When Obama took office, 60 percent of Drug War spending targeted supply. In 2016, the administration touts that “for the first time” the drug czar’s office is seeking “more funding for demand-reduction efforts than those focused on supply reduction.”

But this increase in demand-reduction spending has not come at the expense of the draconian supply side, which has held steady. Instead, the Obama administration ballooned the Drug War budget by more than a quarter.

On the supply-reduction side, there has been reorganization. International funding has been slashed from \$2.5 billion in Obama’s first budget to \$1.6 billion in the current request. These cuts have downsized the role of the State Department and the Department of Defense in combating the international drug trade – reducing funding for drug eradication and military equipment in countries like Afghanistan, Colombia and Mexico. The DEA’s international footprint, in contrast, has grown slightly and now accounts for about one-sixth of the agency’s \$2.8 billion budget.

The Drug War budget has grown by billions on the demand-reduction side, from \$9.1 billion to \$15.8 billion. Prevention funding is actually down; the administration killed a feckless \$300 million edu-



A NEW CZAR Director of National Drug Control Policy Michael Botticelli is a recovering alcoholic working to change what he calls the “failed policies” of the Drug War.

cation grant to the states in 2010. But the drug-treatment budget has nearly doubled – from \$7.2 billion to \$14.2 billion in the latest request. The biggest driver of this spending is Obamacare, which mandates drug-treatment coverage under both private insurance and government programs.

The transformation of Medicaid from its traditional focus on poor mothers and children to a broad-based health program covering low-income Americans is making drug treatment available to millions for the first time. In several states, expanding Medicaid has doubled the population of people with substance-abuse disorders now able to seek treatment. Studies going back decades demonstrate that treatment spending saves money in the long run, with every \$1 spent on treatment saving as much as \$7 in social costs. “Dollar for dollar, best thing they could do,” says Ethan Nadelmann, executive director of the Drug Policy Alliance.

Still, Obama insists that treatment remains “grossly under-resourced” because Republican leaders in 19 states have

blocked Medicaid expansion – denying health coverage to millions. As a workaround, the president’s latest ONDCP budget has added nearly \$1 billion in targeted treatment funding, including for states that haven’t expanded Medicaid, but are being hit hard by the opioid epidemic. “We’ve got to make sure,” Obama said, that people “can get the treatment when they need it.”

THE CHANGES TO THE WAR ON Drugs under Obama are historic, and many appear irreversible, but the hard-line ideology of the Drug War is not everywhere in retreat. In many states, the conflict is being waged as though Nixon were still in power. Maine’s Republican governor, Paul LePage, said in January that his strategy to curb the opioid crisis is to toughen penalties for out-of-state traffickers. Recalling the worst rhetoric of the Drug War’s past, LePage vilified dealers as “guys with the name D-Money, Smoothie, Shifty.” LePage has endorsed Donald Trump, who paints Mexicans as drug dealers and rapists. Trump promises to curb the heroin epidemic by walling off the border with Mexico. “You have a tremendous problem with heroin and drugs,” he told voters in New Hampshire. “We’re gonna have borders again and...help you solve that very big problem.”

The trouble with Trump’s proposal is the problem at the root of the War on Drugs itself: A wall is no more a barrier to addiction than a war is an effective treatment.

In fact, Trump’s wall would be of no value against heroin traffickers, who cross the most fortified parts of the Mexican border every day. Take it from Adm. Bill Gortney, head of U.S. Northern Command. In Senate testimony in March, Gortney told the Senate Armed Services Committee that “a wall will not solve the immense problems” of narcotraffic.

The most dangerous drugs, the admiral told senators, are not entering the United States through the open desert, as in years past. “Heroin and fentanyl are coming through...the legal entry-control points across our border,” he said. The drugs are smuggled in “very, very small shipments, which is very, very difficult for our partners to be able to detect.” The best U.S. counter-narcotics strategies and technology, Gortney testified, have been “circumvented by a very adaptable enemy.”

In its full scope, the admiral’s testimony underscored the futility of the war effort – a lesson that should not have taken the world’s leading capitalist society 45 years and more than \$1 trillion to learn: Military might is no match for market economics.

“If there’s a demand” for drugs, Sen. John McCain posed to the admiral, “there’s going to be a supply.”

Gortney responded, “That’s absolutely correct, sir.”

The

Why is Chris Evans having such
a hard time being Captain America?
BY JOSH EELLS

Anxious

Avenger

THERE ARE BLACK HELICOPTERS buzzing over Hollywood Boulevard. The LAPD has shut down traffic in both directions. Thousands of civilians are amassed on the sidewalk. If this were a comic-book movie, now would be the time when the sky opens up and the alien mothership comes swooping in, space guns blazing. But because it's just the premiere of a comic-book movie – Marvel's *Captain America: Civil War*, opening this month – all the hubbub merely presages the arrival of the man of the hour, the leader of the Avengers, Cap himself: 34-year-old Chris Evans, flashing an action-figure smile as he steps out of a blue Audi sports car and onto the red carpet.

The sports car was not Evans' idea. Audi is a big sponsor of *Captain America: Civil War*, and the product placement apparently extends to the premiere, where he and his co-star/antagonist in the film, Robert Downey Jr., have been asked to arrive in matching Audi R8s – red for Downey's Iron Man, blue for Evans' Cap. Up until then, Evans was having a stress-free evening, pre-partying at his home in the Hollywood Hills with his mom and brother and some buddies from back home in Boston, getting loose before his big night. But when he got to the theater and had to do the car thing – that's when the anxiety kicked in.

"It's a little nerve-racking," Evans says two days later. "You're in the SUV with your family, your people. And then you have to pull over in some weird parking lot and do the swap. There's security and all these people. All of a sudden you're out of your comfort zone. It's strange. The little things that can tip you over."

"It's funny," says Scarlett Johansson, a frequent *Captain America* and *Avengers* co-star who's known Evans since she was 17. "He's extremely easygoing, he loves to hang out, he loves to be around people. But whenever we do a premiere, or he has to be in the fray in some work-related context, he's terrified." Downey told something similar to Jimmy Kimmel the night after the premiere: "Chris Evans is such a nervous Nellie," he said. "We're supposed to drive in in the Audis, and he's like, 'Bro, I don't know – should you go first, or I should go first?' I was like, 'Man up, dude!'" (Later, to *ROLLING STONE*, he also says Evans had to excuse himself for a cigarette.)

You'd think this stuff would be easy for Evans by now. He's one of the biggest names in the Marvel Cinematic Universe, the sprawling, \$8 billion Disney-owned enterprise that includes his three *Captain America* films; the *Iron Man*, *Thor* and *Hulk* franchises; and the all-star *Avengers* team-ups, two of the top-grossing movies of all time. Shouldn't he be comfortable with a few cameras and fans? But to hear Evans tell it, he's one of the least-comfortable movie stars around. The acting part is fine; it's everything else he can't handle.

PHOTOGRAPH BY PEGGY SIROTA



Evans has played Captain America in four movies that together have grossed \$4 billion, with another coming out this month and two more slated.

"A red carpet lasts, what, 30 minutes tops? But that to me is like 30 minutes of walking on hot coals," Evans says, sitting at home in jeans, a Toronto Maple Leafs hat and a chambray shirt with a rip in one arm. "It's not like a junket – junkets you sit in a room and they bring 'em in. I can do that all day and not have a meltdown. But the premiere – that's overwhelming. It's the volume of it: You're in the center of this thing. You can fight a whole army if they line up one at a time. But if they surround you, you're fucked."

Evans' mom, Lisa, is sitting in the next room (she stuck around after the premiere), and his one-year-old puppy, Dodger, a rambunctious golden-retriever mix, is on his lap. The house – a midcentury number he bought after the first *Avengers* – is perched near a stunning cliffside overlook with IMAX views of the San Fernando Valley, including, if you know where to squint, the headquarters of Marvel Studios: the conglomerate that's both the source of most of the great things in Evans' life as well as the cause of much of his agony.

When Marvel first offered him the role of Captain America, Evans turned it down repeatedly. Partly it was the proposed nine-movie contract. ("It's nuts," he says. "If you make a big movie like *Independence Day*, they'll lock you up for three movies. But nine is insane. We got it down to six.") But he was also afraid of all the other commitments – the promo tours, the corporate tie-ins, the cameos, the auxiliary stuff. "This is the most outside asks you can incorporate into a movie," Evans says. "I love acting – but that's not all you're asking me to do."

He was also afraid of losing his anonymity: "In case you haven't figured this out, he's super-private," his mom says. And interviews were the worst of all. "I've been dreading press since January," Evans says. "It's nice to talk about the work with people who are interested – but I freak out when I hear stupid questions about stupid things, and you've gotta act like you give a fuck. It's part of the job, I've got to sell this thing. But it's just a gross feeling. It makes me insecure."

You don't really expect this from a guy like Evans. He seems like an amiable bro, a thoughtful-yet-beefcake-y leading man who worships Tom Brady and the Patriots, and once served as the model for a surfer named Tyler in the board game *Mystery Date*. ("Favorite class: Study hall." "Ideal date: Walk around the cliffs.") But the truth is, behind the shredded biceps and the star-spangled suit, Evans is just as awkward, sensitive and neurotic as all the rest of us.

Contributing editor JOSH EELLS wrote about *Ethan Hawke* in April.

"Chris can be a delicate flower a little bit," Johansson says. "You just want to pat his back: 'Aw, Chrissy. You're all right.' It's not like Robert [Downey Jr.], who I think puts on a persona to protect his private self. It's not in Chris' nature to put on a face that isn't totally natural."

His other problem, Evans says, is that he suffers from what he calls "a noisy brain." It makes him second-guess everything, turns casual conversations into whirlpools of self-doubt. "It's a real nice spiral," he says, grimacing. He's tried calming his mind through meditation and Buddhism – he once spent three weeks studying with a guru in Rishikesh, India, and he says reading *Siddhartha* changed his life – and by reading the works of Oprah-approved spiritualist Eckhart Tolle. "I've gotten better," Evans says. But he still struggles sometimes with overanalyzing

"I'm really trying to have kids soon. But first, certain things will have to fall into place. Gotta find a wife."

things, with letting his self-consciousness take over, with not just being present in the moment.

"We used to call Chris 'the thinker,'" his mom says. "When we'd go on long car rides, I'd say, 'Bring your Gameboy,' and he'd say, 'No, Mom, I'm just going to look out the window and think.' Sometimes I say, 'Get out of there, honey. Get out of your head. Come out here with the rest of us. It's really nice out here.' But this is who he's been since he was a little boy."

It can be hard for Evans in Hollywood. "I don't like having silly surface discussions," he says. "A lot of times that's required in this business. That's when the social anxiety kicks in. When you feel kind of uninvested, like you're playing some sort of game you know you shouldn't be playing. You're making just more noise, and more trash, and almost selling something, and nothing of this is clean. It's all a river of garbage, and you're just in it."

But when he's acting, on the other hand, "that part of your brain just gets quiet," Evans says. "The noise goes away. You're just leaned into the experience. You're really riding the wave of just living."

And then, in classic Evans style, he plays that last part back in his head. "That's an incredibly douche-y thing to say," he says, cringing. "Please don't put that in there. Ugh! 'Riding the wave of just living?'" He laughs. "No! Fuck!"

EVANS HAS A SHIELD IN HIS house. Marvel sent it to him; sometimes it comes out at parties once everyone's had a few drinks. It's a pretty good selfie prop. "You want to see it?" he says.

We walk over to a junk-filled hall closet and he opens the door. Propped on the floor, there's an exact replica of Captain America's red-white-and-blue shield. It's heavier than it looks. "Yeah, it's dangerous," Evans says, hefting it. Then he lays it back on the ground and closes the door.

According to Downey, out of all the Marvel franchises, *Captain America* was, weirdly, the riskiest. It's easy to forget \$1 billion in box-office receipts later, but the character, with his old-fashioned morality and World War II-era squareness, had the potential to be a real cornball. Cap doesn't drink or swear; until recently, Evans thought he'd never even had sex. ("At this point, he probably has," Evans says. "He *has* to have. But he's respectful – he never talks about it.") Evans has done a great job taking a character who could have been, as he puts it, "a real piece of cardboard" and injecting him with humanity, wit and charm.

"There's a sort of a loneliness about the way that Chris plays [Cap] that I think is very touching," Johansson says. "He has a kind of longing, self-searching quality that Chris has given him – like he's struggling with something maybe all of us are struggling with." Downey, who helped persuade Evans to sign up for the role, agrees. "Somehow or another," he says, "he made Captain America cool."

"He's a little vanilla," admits Evans of Cap. "He's a good man, but he's not exactly flashy. He doesn't have the great one-liners; he's not flying around shooting missiles. He's probably not the one your kids want to dress up as. So it's tricky."

As a kid growing up in Sudbury, a "cliché suburban town" about 30 minutes outside Boston, Evans never dressed up as any comic-book character. He loved drawing and animation, especially Disney films (*Beauty and the Beast* made him want to be an artist, and he can still sing all of *The Little Mermaid*), but surprisingly, he had no interest in comics ("Not even one," his mom says). Lisa was a stay-at-home mom, and his dad is a dentist. There's a line in



Civil War when Tony Stark says to Cap, “Sometimes I want to punch you in your perfect teeth.” “My dad loves that line,” says Evans, grinning.

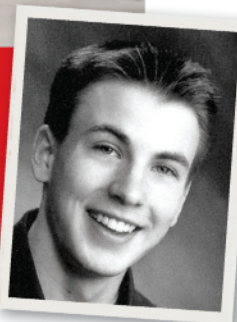
Evans has compared his family to New England Von Trapps: He has three siblings, all of whom grew up performing. “There’s no greater joy than being at a premiere with Evans’ family,” says Downey. “It’s like the classy, cultured version of *The Fighter*.” At 10, Chris started acting at a local youth theater, doing plays like *The Velveteen Rabbit* and *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. (“I actually got hosed in that one,” he recalls, laughing. “I should have been Willie Wonka. I got Grandpa Joe.”)

In high school, the six-foot Evans played lacrosse and wrestled, but really he was a drama dork in a lax bro’s body. He starred in productions like *Bye Bye Birdie*, and his senior year, he was voted “most theatrical.” (“He wanted to be ‘best-dressed,’” says Lisa.) To this day, “You can start singing any line from *Oklahoma!* and he’ll just break out in song,” Johansson says. After a summer internship at a casting agency in New York, he got an agent of his own, and soon landed a pilot and moved to L.A., where he found work as the handsome leading dude in high school films like *Not Another Teen Movie* and *The Perfect Score*.

“He was trying to figure out where he fit,” recalls Johansson, who co-starred with Evans in the latter film, and again a few years later in *The Nanny Diaries*, in which he played a character known as “Harvard Hottie.” “He was kind of pigeonholed as this all-American hunky guy, and it didn’t seem to be satisfying his creative urge. At the time, I think he was actually considering going solely into directing, because I

The All-American

Above: With Falcon, Ant-Man, Hawkeye, Scarlet Witch, Winter Soldier (from left) in *Civil War*. Right: As a high school senior, 1999. Making the next two *Avengers* “will take 10 months – my body’s gonna fall apart.”



think he felt that he had more to offer than what he was being given. It’s ridiculous to say that he’s plagued by these devastatingly good looks...but with Chris, it’s almost like the studios need to mature, more than the other way around.”

In 2004, Evans was cast in a Marvel superhero movie that would change his life: the first version of *The Fantastic Four*. “It was exciting,” he says of his role as Johnny Storm, a.k.a. the Human Torch. “It was the best I’d been paid so far. You knew it had a franchise hope. So I was thrilled. But at the same time a little uneasy – because the movies weren’t exactly the way I’d envisioned them.” (Evans’ polite way of saying “not good.”) “It started to wear on me,” he says. “I want to make movies I’m proud of. And when that doesn’t happen, it can get really challenging.”

The whole experience may be what made him gun-shy a few years later when Marvel came calling again, this time about *Captain America*. “I was thrilled to have been chosen,” Evans says, “because there was no way I was going to do it. I looked at it as the thing that would get me to the next thing. Then all of a sudden you’re doing it, and you’re like, ‘Oh, fuck. What did I do?’”

The new movie, *Civil War*, focuses on an existential question that crops up frequently in comics: Are the Avengers superheroes or vigilantes, and who should be held re-

sponsible for the civilian casualties left in their wake? That debate pits Cap, a.k.a. Steve Rogers, and his supporters against Iron Man, a.k.a. Tony Stark, and his – a conflict that’s been brewing since the first *Avengers* movie, when Cap told a wise-cracking Stark to “put on the suit, let’s go a few rounds.” (“I have to tell you,” Evans’ mom says. “Before he made *Avengers*, Chris was absolutely terrified of Downey. He said, ‘Mom, I’m so nervous. I don’t want to screw up.’”) Interestingly, it’s Captain America – by-the-book member of the Greatest Generation and literal tool of government propaganda – who comes down on the side of defying U.N. authority, while Stark, erstwhile arms dealer and roguish billionaire, favors submitting to their control.

“It’s a nice role reversal,” says Evans. “You have a company man like Steve who always believed in the hierarchy of the military, but in the last couple of movies has seen the people he was loyal to misuse their power. Whereas Tony, who’s always danced to the beat of his own drum, is feeling guilt for the collateral damage they’ve left. But that’s why I like this movie: There’s no clear villain in terms of right and wrong. And the truth is, I actually think Tony is right. To see Steve prioritize himself over what other people need is selfish. That’s what makes it interesting.”

Now that he’s done five movies as Cap, Evans would love to play someone with more of a dark side, like he did in 2013’s excellent *Snowpiercer*. “Since 2010, I’ve never gone more than a year without putting that fuckin’ thing on,” he says of Cap’s suit. He still enjoys the experience, but he’s excited to figure out what comes next: “I’d love to find something where I get to be, like, a flashy defense lawyer. Someone with the gift of gab.” He also wants to try his hand at directing again, after learning a lot on his first feature, 2014’s *Before We Go* – a Linklater-ish love story he made with a budget of \$3 million, roughly what Downey gets paid for commuting to set. Evans even thinks about going to New York and getting back into theater someday. “There’s no press junkets for a play,” he says enviously. “You do your work and you get to go home.”

Evans has been in Los Angeles 17 years now – half his life – and it’s wearing on him a little. “I don’t knock L.A.,” he says. “But L.A. is where I come to work, where I have meetings and, unfortunately, where I feel moments of anxiety. Sometimes L.A. is great. And sometimes you just drive down Sunset like, ‘Ugh. Fuckin’ Hollywood.’”

WE’VE BEEN TALKING FOR A WHILE when Evans’ buzzer rings. “It’s D!” his mom calls from the other room. [Cont. on 64]



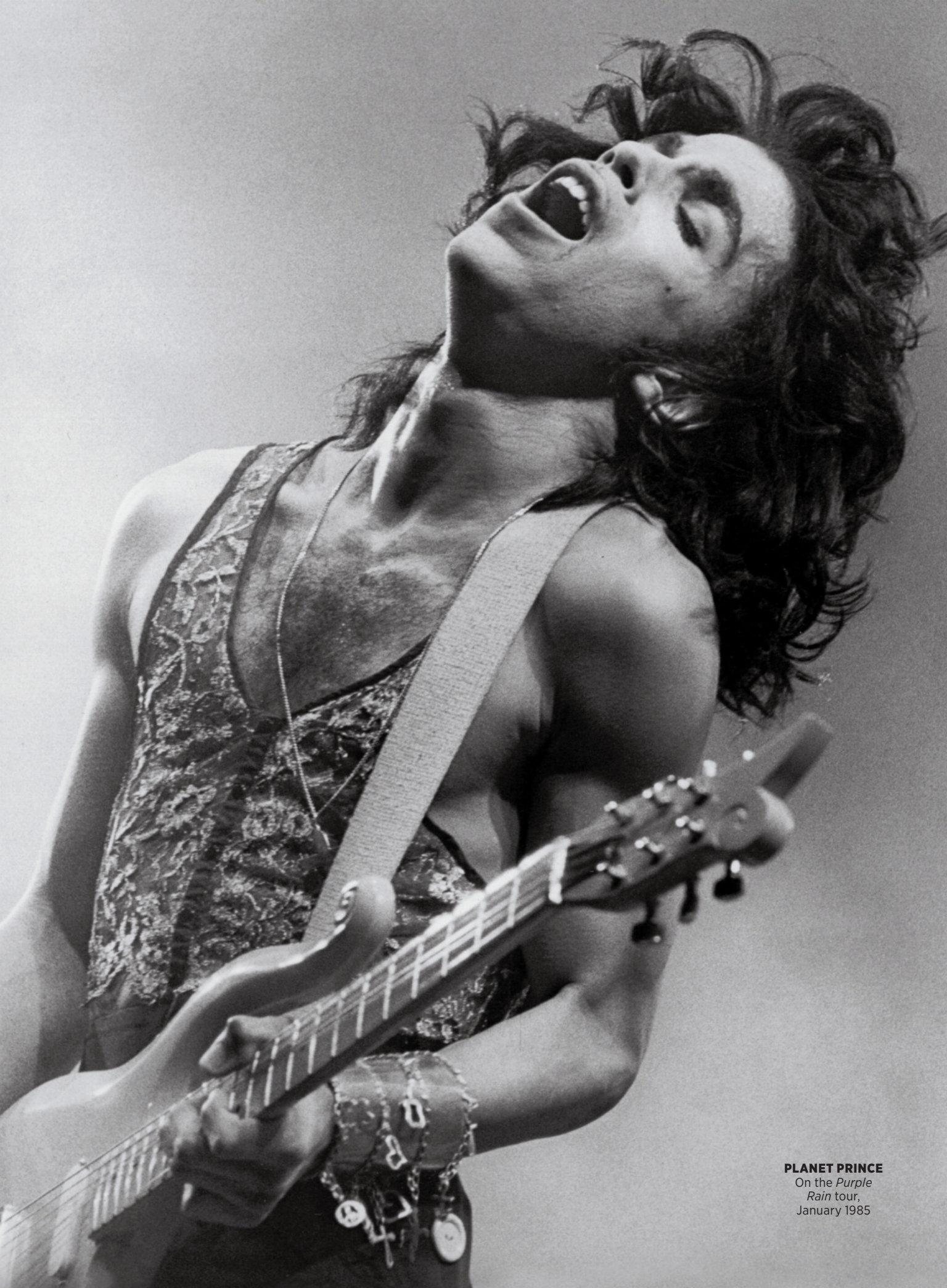
1958 ♀ 2016

Prince

Rock star, funk lord, provocateur,
genius: How he created a world –
but, in the end, could only go it alone

By Joe Levy

ON THURSDAY, APRIL 14TH, AT ABOUT SIX IN THE evening, a black SUV pulled up to the Fox Theatre in Atlanta. It was an hour before showtime, but Prince didn't need much preparation – this was the eighth stop on his Piano and a Microphone Tour, a series of unusual shows, mostly two a night, that saw one of the world's greatest showmen scaling down his performance for an intimate keyboard recital. ♀ “He only soundchecked for a few minutes,” Lucy Freas, the promoter who'd set up this concert, tells **ROLLING STONE**. As had been his habit for more than a decade – whether playing a 4,600-seat theater by himself or a 20,000-capacity arena with a full band



PLANET PRINCE
On the *Purple*
Rain tour,
January 1985

– the shows were pop-ups, arranged on short notice. Freas had gotten an e-mail with the subject line “Prince” a few days before. Prince’s team was looking for an independent promoter – was she interested? She was on the phone 10 minutes later.

These Atlanta shows had originally been scheduled for April 7th, with tickets on sale nine days before (far more time than the 32 hours the Sony Centre in Toronto had to sell tickets for a show in March). The Fox Theatre sold out instantly, and Freas was already working on more dates in Philly, St. Louis and Nashville, as well as a Miami arena concert. But illness forced Prince to postpone Atlanta for a week, and when he arrived that night, he still wasn’t feeling well. “Don’t worry,” his tour coordinator told Freas. “Nobody will know. He’ll perform, and he’ll give it his all.”

When he came onstage for the first show, he seemed at ease, greeting fans in the front before he sat down at the piano and launched into a version of “Little Red Corvette,” dropping in bits of “Dirty Mind” and the *Peanuts* theme. It was a mesmerizing hour and 20 minutes. Piano was Prince’s first instrument – his father, John Nelson, had tried to make his way as a jazz pianist – so the night was a homecoming, a return to the source of all of Prince’s music. (“[My father] didn’t teach me that,” he joked at one point during a playful elaboration on “Chopsticks.” “I taught myself.”) Some moments it felt as if the songs were taking shape for the first time, brief hesitations giving way to new ideas. Others – particularly in the second show, where he played a driving version of “Black Sweat,” from 2006’s *3121* – felt completely realized, his voice and the rhythms ground out by his left hand filling all the space.

As with so many visionary artists, there was a period in Prince’s career – almost all of the 1980s – when he seemed able to look around corners, when his music seemed to live in the future, and then assemble that future around us. Perhaps because of that, there were moments at the Fox Theatre that feel now like premonitions. At the 7:00 show, he covered “A Case of You,” by Joni Mitchell, long one of his favorite artists. The year before, Mitchell had been found alone and unconscious at her Los Angeles home, having suffered a brain aneurysm. (She has since

Prince’s Hot Rock

Issue 394

APRIL 28TH, 1983

Prince was just 24 when he appeared on his first *Rolling Stone* cover, in 1983. It



was just as “Little Red Corvette” was taking off – but he was already surrounded by an intense aura of mystery, brought out in no small part by his recent decision to stop talking to the press. “Rumors started to spread, and now his silence feeds them,” wrote Debby Miller, who talked to everyone in the Prince camp but the man himself. “Is Prince his real name? Is he black or white? Is he a shy little Prince or a despotic king?”

made a partial recovery.) He also played David Bowie’s “Heroes,” a tribute to an artist who had died just three months earlier, and who had been – as Prince himself always was – restless and deliberate with his art and image, and who challenged the norms of gender and genre. The song is about the wish to transcend – to snatch a moment of glory that can transform the impermanent into the eternal – and Prince embodied the lyric, starting each line with a vocal stab that then floated upward.

At the 10:00 show, his third and final encore began with “Sometimes It Snows in April,” from 1986’s *Parade*, a eulogy for the character Prince played in the film *Under the Cherry Moon*, Christopher Tracy. “Sometimes I wish life was never ending,” goes the chorus. “All good things, they say, will never last.” The show concluded with “Purple Rain.” Prince slipped in snatches from “The Beautiful Ones” and “Diamonds and Pearls,” then came back to the 1984 song that announced his ascension to megastar status. The audience joined him in the familiar wordless falsetto at the end, hands clapping, voices lifted. And then it was over.

Three weeks before – following shows in Montreal and Toronto – he’d had afterparties at local clubs. At Toronto’s Everleigh club, the post-show jam came well after closing time. “It was three or 3:30 a.m.,” says promoter Rubin Fogel. “He had flown in on a private plane. He couldn’t fly back until 6 a.m. because of airport curfews. So he just decided to play.”

In Atlanta, there was no afterparty. He went directly to the airport, and around 1 a.m., an emergency call came from the plane. The 1988 Dassault Falcon 900 was less than an hour from Minneapolis, but the jet put down in Moline, Illinois. Though it would be dismissed as the flu – the same cause given for the show cancellations in Atlanta the week before – reports have surfaced that Prince was allegedly treated for a drug overdose, possibly Percocet, at a local hospital, and left because no private room was available. His dynamic stage shows had not been without a price – sources say he had hip problems, possibly dating back more than 30 years to injuries sustained during the *Purple Rain* tour.

He seemed frail but in good spirits the next night, Saturday, April

16th, according to those who attended a dance party held at his Paisley Park compound. He showed off a new guitar, but left it in the case – “I can’t play the guitar at all these days,” he said, according to longtime Prince chronicler Jon Bream’s account of the night in the Minneapolis *Star Tribune* – briefly entertaining a crowd of 300 with his take on “Chopsticks” on a new purple piano. “Wait a few days before you waste your prayers,” he told them.

The following Thursday morning, April 21st, Prince was found in an elevator at Paisley Park. Sources say he had been living by himself in an apartment on the second floor in the back of the 65,000-square-foot complex, having torn down his nearby house in 2005, around the time of his second divorce. The last time he’d been seen alive was about 8 p.m. the previous night. A 911 call was placed at 9:43 a.m., but medics could not revive him and Prince was pronounced dead at 10:07 a.m. He was 57.

In Minneapolis that night, the streets around First Avenue, the club where the performance scenes of the *Purple Rain* movie were filmed, were shut down, as thousands of people gathered to dance and sing along to Prince’s music. They were not alone. They danced in Los Angeles and in Brooklyn, where Spike Lee rolled up the garage door of his 40 Acres and a Mule production company and a DJ blasted Prince tunes through the night.

They were gathered to enact the music, which has always been about community – the utopias of musical and sexual freedom he called Uptown, Paisley Park or Erotic City. He was rock’s greatest trickster figure, the trick being that he could become whatever you imagined a rock star to be. “Am I black or white, am I straight or gay?” he asked in one song. The only answer was yes. He shifted his voice from male to female, and shrouded himself in mystery and impeccably tailored clothing (when he chose to wear clothing), selling fantasy in his music and image. Those fantasies were outrageously sexual and passionately religious, sometimes at the same moment. Rock & roll had always crossed the sacred and profane, so he upped the ante to the apocalyptic and the pornographic.

More than any other Eighties star, Prince brought the dreams of rock & roll past into the present: He wore Jimi Hendrix’s coat, sported Little Richard’s mustache, mastered



James Brown's dance moves, and he did all this over drum-machine beats, showing how the impulses of history could be turned into the sound of the future. "Dearly beloved, we are gathered here today to get through this thing called life," he intoned at the beginning of *Purple Rain*, turning the album that catapulted him to superstardom into a pop marriage ceremony. Whether the people listening were black or white, whether they were straight or gay, they were now bonded, their union consecrated by his music.

Now, he was gone, and so in Minneapolis, Los Angeles and Brooklyn, they honored him in the only way that made sense: by dancing in the streets.

PRINCE ROGERS NELSON was born on June 7th, 1958, at Mount Sinai Hospital in Minneapolis. From the beginning, he carried the hopes and burdens of his father's dreams. John Nelson led a group called the Prince Rogers Trio, though his day job was at Honeywell, a manufacturer of everything from thermostats to airplane parts. "I named my son Prince because I wanted him to do everything I wanted to do," John once said. His mother, Mattie Shaw, was a vocalist who brought to mind the wounded grit of Billie Holiday. She had sung with John's trio, but let it go after they married – the couple already had five children from previous relationships. Mattie was 17

THE EARLY YEARS

(1) Minneapolis, 1977. (2) Prince (right) on his eighth-grade basketball team, 1972. (3) At the Roxy Theatre in Hollywood, 1979.

FOLLOWING SPREAD: New York, December 1982, shortly after the release of 1999

years younger than John, and their personalities differed. "My mom's the wild side of me," Prince told *ROLLING STONE* in 1985. "She's like that all the time. My dad's real serene; it takes the music to get him going." Wildness and serenity would be one of many contradictions he embodied throughout his life.

Music came to him young. "He could hear music even from a very early age," his mother told the Minneapolis *Star Tribune* in 1984. "When he was three or four, we'd go to the department store and he'd jump on...any type of instrument there was. Mostly the piano and organ. I'd have to hunt for him, and that's where he'd be – in the music department." When he was



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no more than five, his mother took him to see his father perform. It was a burlesque show. As the dancers did their thing, the theater vibrated with screams and excitement. "From then on, I think I wanted to be a musician," Prince later said. Eros and music were fused, the power of the combination imprinted on his mind. It would never leave.

Both of his parents were strict Seventh-day Adventists; Prince would say later that the most he got out of religion was "the experience of the choir." He told Chris Rock on MTV in 1997 that the church's message "was based in fear," but he took much from his Adventist Bible study: The church focuses strongly on the Book of Revelations, and the imminent apocalypse that will precede the return of Christ. Prince would begin his breakthrough album, *1999*, with a song that turned the apocalypse into a celebration. And his greatest album took its name from the Adventist magazine *Signs of the Times*.

When Prince was about eight, his parents separated. He'd later remember constant arguments, with his father's music career as a friction point. His father "felt hurt that he never got his break, because of having the wife and kids and stuff," Prince said. "I think music is what broke [my mother] and my father up." John moved from their home in North Minneapolis into an apartment downtown. He left behind his piano, and this is when Prince gravitated to the instrument in earnest. "I had one piano lesson and two guitar lessons as a kid," he told the *Star Tribune*. "I was a poor student, because when a teacher would be trying to teach me how to play junky stuff, I would start playing my own songs." By the time he'd reached high school, he had already mastered keyboards, guitar, bass and drums.

Not long after the divorce, his mother remarried, and Prince moved in with his father. Their reunion didn't last long. When Prince was 13, his father kicked him out, perhaps because of a dalliance with a girl. Years later, Prince remembered calling him from a pay phone, begging to come back, and being refused. "I sat crying at that phone booth for two hours," he told *Rolling Stone* in 1985. "That was the last time I cried."

He moved in with his Aunt Olivia, but his domestic exiles creat-

ed longing and anger that played out in his career: He would build a community in his music and his band, but then cut off band members whenever he felt it necessary; he would most often record albums by himself. He was the only one he could count on. "What if everybody around me split?" he said to *Rolling Stone* in 1990. "Then I'd be left with only me, and I'd have to fend for me. That's why I have to protect me."

He was shy and quiet in public, but a cutup with his friends. At school, he was a disinterested student. Music and sports were his passions. James Harris III (later known as Jimmy Jam) met him in a junior-high music class. "As soon as the teacher left the room, we just started jamming," says Jimmy Jam. "His keyboard runs were amazing – things I couldn't dream of doing, and I thought of myself as a pretty good keyboard player." Prince made the basketball team in junior high and freshman year of high school, despite being not much more than five feet tall. "He was a great basketball player," says Jimmy Jam. "He would come up the court and girls would

be screaming. He had a huge Afro, and if you had an Afro in those days, it was definitely a premium."

His first band came at 14, named Phoenix, then Soul Explosion. Prince played guitar, his friend André Simon Anderson (later known as André Cymone) played bass. When his aunt tired of the band's noise, Prince ended up living at André's house. Soul Explosion would rehearse in the basement. "We used to have a philosophy that when everybody else is eating turkey dinner and watching football games and doing all that kind of stuff, we need to practice," says Cymone. "We're going to be superstars, and if we're going to be superstars, we have to practice." There was a 10 p.m. curfew on music, but Prince eventually moved from André's room down to the basement, where he could turn down his guitar and play until 4 a.m. These nocturnal music-making habits would stay with him the rest of his life.

By 16, he was writing his own songs. The group became Grand Central (with Morris Day on drums), then Champagne. A demo session brought Prince to the attention of Chris Moon, who ran a local studio. When the rest of the band went

across the street during a lunch break, Prince stayed behind. "I look out of the control room into the studio, and he's playing the drums," says Moon. "Then I see him wander over and play a bit of piano. And then he stops playing that and picks up the bass." Moon wanted someone who could add music to some lyrics he'd been working on. He proposed a partnership, and eventually gave Prince keys to the place. It took him about six months to master the studio well enough to run sessions for his one-man-band adventures.

Moon played a demo tape for Owen Husney, a Minneapolis promoter. "Most artists, their sound would be derivative," Husney says. "This didn't have that. He was attempting to create something new. And when I heard that vulnerable little falsetto voice, it was like, 'I want to protect this person.'" He signed on as manager and raised \$50,000 so that Prince had new instruments and a place to live. Then he created an elaborate press kit to market his new artist.

Warners offered a three-album deal and signed a 19-year-old Prince in 1977. The label wanted Prince to collaborate with Maurice White of Earth, Wind and Fire. "The ink wasn't dry on the Warner Bros. contract, and he said, 'Nobody is producing my album,'" Husney says. A session was arranged so that Prince could prove to the label that he didn't need help in the studio. "He put down a guitar track and got it right," Lenny Waronker, then head of A&R for the label, remembered. "Then he put down the drums – wow. You could just tell – the guitar was locked in, the timing was good, you could tell it was easy for him."

As Waronker left the studio, Prince told him, "Don't make me black." Growing up, Prince had been bused to grade school in a white suburb, listened to the Minneapolis rock station KQRS and played Carole King covers in high school. He knew two worlds, and knew there was more power in controlling both, not one. He ran down a list of artists that inspired him: Fleetwood Mac, Jimi Hendrix, Eric Clapton, the Rolling Stones. Warners may have thought it was signing a kid who could play and produce his own work like Stevie Wonder – which would have been remarkable enough. Prince was putting the company on notice that this was only a starting point.

It was not a smooth start. According to Ronin Ro's *Prince: Inside the*

Prince Scores

Issue 429

AUGUST 30TH, 1984

Purple Rain was just weeks away from theaters when Kurt Loder headed to Min-



neapolis to report Prince's second RS cover story. Again, Prince refused to sit for an interview, but this time he walked out of the shoot after test Polaroids, forcing the magazine to use an image from Prince's first RS cover shoot. "The picture one acquires of this wonderkid from scanning his songs and canvassing his colleagues is murky and uncertain," wrote Loder, "which is the way he wants it."



BABY, I'M A STAR

(1) At his landmark Super Bowl show, Miami, 2007. (2) With then-wife Manuela Testolini at the Academy Awards in Los Angeles, 2005. (3) At Olympic Studios, 1988. (4) In July 1996, performing on NBC's *Today* show. (5) With model Damaris Lewis at a Golden State Warriors game, March 3rd, 2016.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: KEVIN MAZUR/WIREIMAGE; KEVORK DJANSEZIAN/AP IMAGES; FRANK GRIFFIN/PHOTO SHOT; RICHARD DREW/AP IMAGES; CARLOS AVILA GONZALEZ/SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE; POLARIS

Music and the Masks, Prince's 1978 debut, *For You*, burned through \$170,000, almost three times its budget. The music bounced with the hint of a new perspective – light pop melodies lifting up R&B grooves, rock guitar pulling them back down – but it felt airless, as if one man had locked himself away with these sounds for too long, which he had. Though the single “Soft and Wet” reached Number 12 on the R&B chart, the album sold poorly, and when Prince put a band together, Warners wouldn't spend money to put it on the road.

He needed his next album to be a hit. 1979's *Prince* was taut and expansive at the same time. Instead of typical R&B horns, Prince stabbed at his keyboards and guitar, and the music nodded toward the post-punk pop of the Cars or Blondie. Its single “I Wanna Be Your Lover” topped the R&B chart and reached Number 11 on the *Billboard* Hot 100, and would sell 500,000 copies.

His next album, 1980's *Dirty Mind*, celebrated orgasmic pleasures, from simply doing it all night, to doing it in a threesome, doing it with a bride on the way to her wedding, doing it with strangers and doing it with your sister. There was nothing you couldn't do, these songs said. The music was just as polymorphous. Ice-cold New Wave keyboards were heated by funk guitar, and though some of the melodies had a Sixties classicism, the sound was utterly new – so stripped-down it almost seemed like dub reggae, a music of subtraction. On the album cover, Prince wore a trench coat over black bikini underwear. What audience was he trying to appeal to? Black? White? Men? Women?

This would become the central dynamic of Eighties pop, as Prince, Michael Jackson and Madonna used music and image to cross the boundaries of race, gender and genre in ways that electrified and united audiences. But Prince was there first with *Dirty Mind*. It peaked at 45 on the *Billboard* albums chart, but its impact was bigger than that. The critic Robert Christgau would call Prince “the first commercially viable artist in a decade to claim the visionary high ground of Lennon and Dylan and Hendrix.”

That vision could not be contained to an album a year. He'd need more. After the *Dirty Mind* tour wrapped

Prince Talks

Issue 456

SEPTEMBER 12TH,
1985

The cover line said it all: “Prince Talks.” After refusing to say



a word to reporters for years, Prince was finally ready to grant an in-depth interview to promote 1985's *Around the World in a Day*, which was failing to match the sales of *Purple Rain*. “I used to tease journalists early on,” he confessed to writer Neal Karlen, “because I wanted them to concentrate on the music.... I don't live in the past. I don't play my old records for that reason. I make a statement, then move on to the next.”

in April 1981, he wanted to create a funk band, and he approached the Minneapolis group Flyte Tyme – including Jimmy Jam on keyboards and Terry Lewis on bass – with an idea: He'd write, produce and perform the material, they'd sing and tour it. Calling the new band the Time, Prince recorded the six songs on their debut album in two weeks. Then, in 10 days in August, he recorded his own fourth album, *Controversy*. Its October release coincided with an interesting invitation: The Rolling Stones wanted Prince to open their dates at the Memorial Coliseum in L.A., before crowds of 100,000, on October 9th and 11th.

Prince opened the first show – which also included George Thorogood and the J. Geils Band on the bill – at two in the afternoon. “He came out with the trench coat and bikini briefs,” says J. Geils frontman Peter Wolf. “When the trench coat opened up, the audience didn't quite understand. People started turning on him, yelling, throwing things.” Prince was unable to finish his set. Two days later, things were even worse. Bottles flew at the stage during the first song, and Prince walked off in the middle of another.

It was the last time Prince would open a show for anyone. After this, he built his own world.

PRINCE BEGAN WORK ON his fifth album, *1999*, in early 1982. He was 23 years old and entering a golden period: For the next three years, it seemed like every waking moment yielded a song, and every song was a hit. He now had three groups: his own band, the Revolution; the Time; and a trio of women in lingerie he called Vanity 6. Before long, he would also be creating music for percussionist Sheila E. He was ceaseless, sometimes working for three days straight without sleep. “Do I have to eat?” he mused in *ROLLING STONE* in 1985. “I wish I didn't have to eat.”

By the end of 1985, he had made 15 albums in seven years – seven under his own name; three by the Time; two from Sheila E., and one each from Vanity 6, Apollonia 6 and the Family. Those albums generated 13 Top 20 hits on the *Billboard* Hot 100. The Minneapolis sound – that synth-driven blend of funk, pop and rock which Prince pi-

oneered – was everywhere, especially after Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis, whom Prince had fired from the Time, began producing a string of hits for artists like the S.O.S. Band, Klymaxx and Janet Jackson. Then there were the Prince songs that became huge hits for Chaka Khan (“I Feel for You,” 1984), Sheena Easton (“Sugar Walls,” 1984), and the Bangles (“Manic Monday,” 1986).

Prince had gone after all this, but on his own terms. No one would have predicted that he'd break through with singles about the End Times or a sexually voracious woman, or that he could increase the power of his burgeoning fame by refusing to do interviews. Yet that's exactly what happened with *1999*. He started work on the album at the Minneapolis home studio he called Uptown, and then shifted to Sunset Sound in L.A., recording so much material that he insisted Warners release a double album. The label – enthused by a hit Prince had crafted for the Time, “777-9311” – agreed. The album arrived in October 1982, and when he went on tour behind it, Vanity 6 and the Time opened. His universe was taking shape.

The shows were ecstatic. He was a guitar hero who could dance like James Brown, then bounce out of a split and run to the keyboards to unleash another solo. And in the spring of 1983, radio and MTV embraced “Little Red Corvette” – his ode to a fast girl who kept condoms (some of them used) in her pocket – flipping the switch on platinum sales.

Prince wanted a mass audience as expansive as his vision for his music. Jackson, whose crossover juggernaut *Thriller* was released a month after *1999*, was a rival. But “Michael wasn't the biggest priority to kill,” Revolution guitarist Wendy Melvoin said. “It was everyone.”

The mixed-race, mixed-gender band Prince had assembled, the Revolution, was the first step: “His dream was that we'd be Fleetwood Mac mixed with Sly and the Family Stone,” said Lisa Coleman, who played keyboards. Said Prince, “I wanted community more than anything else.” Jams during soundchecks were beginning to yield song ideas. The next album would be more collaborative than any he'd made before.

Purple Rain wouldn't be just an album. Prince wanted to make a movie as well. William Blinn, who wrote the first draft of what would become the script for *Purple Rain*,



recalled how the story took shape when Prince sat at the piano to play Blinn some of his father's music and began to talk about his dad. "It was as if he were sorting out his own mystery – an honest quest to figure himself out," Blinn said. "He saved all the money on shrinks and put it in the movie."

Director Albert Magnoli spent a month in Minneapolis hanging out with Prince and his band, the Time and Vanity 6. He rewrote the script to focus on the musical rivalry between the Revolution and the Time, and the domestic drama that Prince's character, the Kid, endured at home. Hollywood studios weren't interested, and Prince's managers turned to Warner Bros. chairman Mo Ostin, who put up \$2 million against future royalties. It was a shrewd move. On a budget of \$7.2 million, the *Purple Rain* movie grossed \$68 million. The album went to Number One and stayed there for 24 weeks, eventually selling more than 10 million copies.

Prince had understood, as James Brown did when he cut *Live at the Apollo* in 1962, that if more people could experience the power of his live show, they would recognize how unique his gifts were. The movie

gave him the fame he'd craved. And as the wild success of the album showed, it was once again on his terms. "When Doves Cry," the first single, was a more disorienting form of pop music than anyone had ever taken to Number One before – it had no bass, carried instead by strangled guitar, the crack of Prince's trademark Linn drum machine, and keyboards. And "Purple Rain," which went to Number Two, showed how different he was from Michael Jackson – Jackson needed Eddie Van Halen to play guitar on "Beat It," his rock breakthrough. The solo that blew Prince's rock ballad wide open was his own.

The *Purple Rain* tour began in November 1984. "I really couldn't liken it to anything other than the Beatles," says Alan Leeds, Prince's tour manager at the time. But those roaring crowds also marked the end of the golden period. Things would never be the same.

IN APRIL 1985, PRINCE ANNOUNCED he was taking a break from live performance and released his seventh album, *Around the World in a Day*. He refused to let Warners promote a single, or market the album in record

stores. Thus did he begin a period of withdrawal that never truly ended. After *Around the World in a Day* dropped quickly from Number One, he relented and let Warners focus on "Raspberry Beret" as a single and video – it became a Number Two hit on the *Billboard* Hot 100.

His connection with his band began to fray. He had elevated Wendy and Lisa to star status, an acknowledgment of their abilities and contributions, and a welcome sign that he could treat women as more than sex objects. Yet they wanted more creative input, and would leave in 1986, after his next album, *Parade*, the soundtrack to the disastrous film *Under the Cherry Moon*, which Prince himself directed.

His last two albums had gone to Number One; *Parade* climbed to Number Three, and then no higher, despite its Number One single "Kiss." When he told Warners his next album would be a triple album, the label refused. He had always gotten his way up to then, but Prince lost the fight. And so took shape a contradiction that had no undoing: The album that would prove to be his greatest work was also the proof that his power was no longer absolute.

THE LAST SHOW

At the Fox Theatre in Atlanta, April 14th, 2016, one week before his death

He pared the triple down to a double: *Sign 'O' the Times*. It contained dreamscape pop like "Starfish and Coffee" and "The Ballad of Dorothy Parker"; bedrock funk workouts like "Housequake" and "Hot Thing"; and a trio of songs that formed his most tender exploration of romance and gender: "If I Was Your Girlfriend," "Strange Relationship" and "I Could Never Take the Place of Your Man." It stands as one of the best records of the 1980s, but he was no longer unstoppable. *Sign 'O' the Times* peaked at Number Six, and its fortunes might have been helped by a tour, but Prince refused to bring the production he'd mounted in Europe to the U.S. He opted instead for a concert film, shot mostly on a soundstage at his recently built Paisley Park facility in suburban Minneapolis.

In 1987, he delivered a raw album called *The Funk Bible* to Warner Bros., then experienced a late-night vision that convinced him the album was too angry to release. He asked the label to destroy more than 400,000 copies of what would come to be known as *The Black Album*. In return he gave them a more spiritually and mu-

sically uplifting collection, 1988's *Lovesexy*, but wanted all the songs grouped into one continuous track on the CD, to control the listening experience. It failed to crack the Top 10 of the albums chart, his first album since *Controversy*, in 1981, to do so. Worse, the *Lovesexy* tour – his first tour in the U.S. in three years – lost money.

Angered that Warners would not let him release the music he wanted at the pace he wanted, he dropped his name for a symbol, thinking that his new glyph persona wouldn't be bound by Prince's record contract. When he found out there was no freedom from his contract, he took to writing the word "slave" on his face. He became a figure of ridicule. "You're the only slave that owns the plantation," Alan Leeds told him. But in his haphazard way, Prince was a revolutionary. The relationship between labels and artists has shifted drastically in the digital age, and Prince's concerns about owning his masters and controlling his music are now common currency.

In 1996, he ended his contract with Warners. It should have been a time of celebration. But it was marked by stress and tragedy. On Valentine's Day, he had married Mayte Garcia, one of his backup dancers, and the couple were expecting a child. He spent the spring working on two projects, his final album for Warners (*Chaos and Disorder*) and a three-CD set that would announce his freedom (*Emancipation*). According to Prince biographer Alex Hahn, on April 21st – exactly 20 years before his death – after what seemed to be one of his marathon three-day working sessions, Garcia found him passed out in the Paisley Park studio. He was brought to the hospital, but when he regained consciousness, he wouldn't stay.

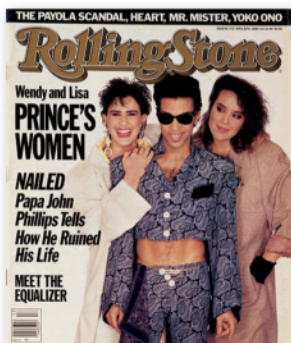
That October, the couple experienced an unimaginable loss: Their child was born with a rare genetic disorder and died within a week. In pain, Prince refused to address the truth in an interview with Oprah Winfrey just days after the child's death. "Our family exists," he said. "It's only the beginning." But this wish was not to be. The couple separated in 1999.

Prince's Women

Issue 472

APRIL 24TH, 1986

Prince's fourth RS cover centered around his Revolution bandmates Wendy Melvoin



and Lisa Coleman shortly before they splintered off to form a pop duo.

Prince Enters the '90s

Issue 589

OCTOBER 18TH, 1990

A year after "Batdance" gave him his fourth Number One hit, Prince



spoke to RS while working on his movie *Graffiti Bridge* and touring to support the soundtrack.

IN 2004, PRINCE COULD claim something he hadn't enjoyed for more than a decade: He was the center of attention, and once again it was for his music. On February 8th, he opened the Grammys in Los Angeles, performing a medley of "Purple Rain," "Baby I'm a Star" and "Let's Go Crazy" with Beyoncé, and throwing in a bit of her hit "Crazy in Love." For five minutes, it was *Purple Rain* all over again, 24 million people watching in awe as he demonstrated his command of the stage. It would take the Grammys another six years to match these ratings.

Five weeks later, on March 15th, he was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, in a ceremony held in New York. The night's highlight came during a rendition of George Harrison's "While My Guitar Gently Weeps." Harrison was posthumously inducted that evening as a solo performer, and the song was sung by Jeff Lynne and Tom Petty, who had known Harrison well. But the final moment went to Prince. It is a purposeful moment – in front of the keepers of rock's legacy, he stakes his claim as a guitar god, edging the song from a solemn honor into something more thrilling. His playing is lyrical, but full of power, as for nearly three minutes he makes his guitar moan and strut. "They rehearsed a bunch of times," says Paul Shaffer, the musical director for the Hall of Fame inductions. "Every time, you could see this was going to tear the roof off the place. But Prince kept a little something in reserve for the actual performance itself." At one point, he shifts gears so quickly it sounds as though he's trading bars with himself, a one-man guitar duel. Behind him, Harrison's son, Dhani, plays acoustic, and beams with joy.

Shortly after the induction, Prince began an 89-date arena tour of the U.S., and released a new album through Columbia, *Musicology*. He now used the music industry for his own purposes. He released live albums and rarities through his website, and took advantage of the promotional power of major labels when it suited him. He functioned as a modern pop star, earning money reliably on the road and looking for revenue wherever he could find it.

He had remarried in 2001, to Manuela Testolini, the same year he became a Jehovah's Witness. The faith lasted longer than the marriage. They divorced in 2006, shortly after he demolished the Minneapolis house they shared. He made Paisley Park his residence, when not renting L.A. mansions for \$70,000 a month.

There were moments – like his majestic Super Bowl halftime performance in 2007 – where he was center stage in the culture again. There was also chaos, much of it self-generated. His Paisley Park label folded in 1994, and there were layoffs at the compound in 1996. At the time of his death, it had ceased being a full-time operation. There were no longer engineers always on duty if he got the urge to record in the middle of the night, or any security, for that matter. There was Prince, his assistant, and someone to care for and run the building.

On April 19th, Prince went to the Dakota Jazz Club in downtown Minneapolis to see jazz and R&B singer Lizz Wright. He stayed for the whole set, including the encore, a rarity for him, and left with a strut and his cane over his shoulder.

Two days later he was dead. Some have speculated that hip difficulties may have led him to painkillers. He is said to have had corrective hip surgery in 2010. At press time, the results of Prince's autopsy had not been released.

On April 23rd, a memorial service was held at Paisley Park for Prince, whose remains had been cremated. "It was quiet and somber," says Sheila E. "The lights were dimmed. Candles were burning. Just like Prince would have done. His music was playing at a low volume. There were very few people, and they're in disbelief. You expect him to walk out into the room and greet you."

But if he greets us now, it will be through his music. There is, by all accounts, a vault of unreleased material – an unimaginable number of songs and live performances, though their fate is unclear. It doesn't really matter. There is already enough – an overwhelming amount. It's said that there was a point when he made one song – at least one – every day, as if he was guided by that line in "1999" about how we're all running out of time. And we are. But the music keeps going.

Additional reporting by
DAVID BROWNE, PATRICK
DOYLE and ANDY GREENE

A Final Visit

SCENES FROM AN INTIMATE 2014 INTERVIEW WITH PRINCE

By Brian Hiatt

IT IS, IN THEORY, A MUNDANE sight, nothing 2 get excited about: just a 55-year-old man in his suburban Minneapolis workplace, scrolling through a Windows Media Player library on a clunky Dell computer. An equally ordinary multi-line phone sits beside it, near a lit candle, bottled water and some expensive-looking lotion. A huge old Xerox machine looms over the desk; a window at the far end of the room looks out onto barren trees and an empty, snow-lined highway. It's early evening on Saturday, January 25th, 2014, in Chanhassen, Minnesota.

The office is on the second floor of the 65,000-square-foot Paisley Park compound. The little guy sitting at the keyboard owns it all, had it all built back in the Eighties. And Prince being Prince, it's fascinating to watch him do just about anything. The more ordinary the activity – clicking a mouse, say – the weirder it feels. Prince has a large Afro, and he's dressed in dark, diaphanous layers, with a vest over a flowing long-sleeved shirt, form-fitting grayish-black slacks, and sneakers with high Lucite heels that light up with every step. He's wearing obvious makeup – foundation, eyeliner, probably more. His thin, precision-trimmed mustache extends just past his lips in a semicircle.

On characteristically short notice, Prince invited me here to report what we intend to be his seventh *ROLLING STONE* cover story. I spend seven hours at Paisley Park, and he sits for two lengthy, thoughtful, amiable interviews. I was told not to curse or to ask about the past; though I eventually violate both rules, he invites me to join him on the road later. In the end, however, he won't sit for a photo shoot, instead offering us pre-prepared,



heavily retouched pictures. The whole thing falls through. I hold on to my reporting, assuming, all too correctly, that we will save the material for our next Prince cover.

That night, Prince doesn't look his age – doesn't look any particular age, really. He's very thin, but not fragile – a strict vegan who, by his own account, sometimes doesn't eat at all (“I have gone long periods with no food, and also water – people have to remind me to drink water because I always forget to do that”). He doesn't sleep enough, either, and he avoids sex: One of the most de-

OUT OF HIDING

At the French Open tennis tournament in Paris, June 2014

liriously sensual performers who ever lived – the one who sang “Jack U Off” and “Gett Off” and “Do Me, Baby” – insists he's celibate. His reasons are both religious and “energy”-related (“The hunger turns into something else,” he says), though he maintains close relationships with several young female singer-songwriters. He is, at this stage in his life, a kind of cheerful musical monk. “I am music,” he says. Playing it is his greatest and perhaps only pleasure. But he's been an ascetic even on that front as of late, recording less than ever, waiting four years between al-

bums. It'll stand as the longest break of his career.

Prince famously liberated himself from his record deal with Warner Bros. in 1996, and it apparently took him years to realize that his freedom extended to *not* releasing music. "I write more than I record now, and I also play live a lot more than I record," he says. "I used to record something every day. I always tease that I have to go to studio rehab."

"I'm a very in-the-moment person," he continues. "I do what feels good in the moment... I'm not on a schedule, and I don't have any sort of contractual ties. I don't know in history if there's been any musicians that have been self-sufficient like that, not beholden. I have giant bills, large payrolls, so I do have to do tours.... But there's no *need* to record anymore." He makes a direct connection between fasting, celibacy and his abstention from recording. "After four days, you don't want food anymore.... It's like this thing that says, 'Feed me, feed me.' When it realizes it's not going to get fed, it goes away.... It's the same with music. I had to see what it's like to stop making albums. And then you go, 'Oh, wait a minute, I don't feel the need to do that anymore.'"

Prince brings me up to the office to play tracks from *Plectrum-Electrum*, the album that would finally break his recording fast. He chose from 100 or so songs laid down in one of the downstairs studios with his recently formed backing band, 3rdEyeGirl – the hardest-rocking ensemble he ever assembled. "All recorded live, no punch-ins," he says. "You just do it till you get the take you like." (The album doesn't come out for another eight months, by which time it's accompanied by a more traditional Prince LP called *Art Official Age*.)

Prince and I meet for the first time a few minutes earlier, as he emerges from a rehearsal space with the young women of the band. Hannah Welton, the drummer, a bubbly 23-year-old who looks like Carrie Underwood and plays like John Bonham, introduces herself brightly: "Hi, I'm Hannah!" Prince laughs, not unkindly, and imitates her, chirping "Hi, I'm Prince" in a high voice, as he reaches out a firm, businesslike handshake. His actual speaking voice is deep, soft

and calming, like a DJ on a smooth-jazz station.

As we walk along, he shows no sign of reported double-hip-replacement surgery – no limp, no cane, no apparent discomfort. His brown eyes are alert, and his wit is quick – looking back, it's nearly impossible to square his affect with posthumous rumors of an opioid addiction. He claims not to feel the passage of time, and says mortality doesn't enter his thoughts: "I don't think about 'gone.'" To the contrary, he is immersed in the moment, invested in a creative future that he believes will be long and bright. The pause between albums seems to have been healthy for him, as is the youthful, enthusiastic, near-worshipful presence of the 3rdEyeGirl members. For the first time in years, he's been opening up Paisley Park to local fans for spontaneous events. There's talk of staging one of these shows on the night of my visit, though it evaporates with no notice.

On his way upstairs, Prince struts past a hallway decorated with a photographic timeline of his career – there's "Batdance" Prince, "Slave"-on-his-face Prince and even his 1985 ROLLING STONE cover (he notes that he refused to do a photo shoot, so we ran a still from a video that, in his considered opinion, made his teeth look strange). "There's room for *Purple Rain* or the Super Bowl here," he notes of one empty space, murmuring something about eventually turning Paisley Park into a museum. It already seems a bit like one: a huge, dark, nearly empty space with only a skeleton crew on hand.

We stop at a mural where a painted image of Prince, arms spread, stands astride images of his influences and artists he, in turn, influenced. He tests me, making sure I can recognize Chaka Khan and Sly and the Family Stone, while giving me a pass on missing Tower of Power and Grand Funk Railroad.

Playing the album in his office, he charmingly takes pains to turn the player's visualizer function on, providing state-of-2002 fractal accompaniment to the music. On a stand in the corner is a century-old Portuguese guitar with a teardrop-shape body. A Canon telephoto lens with no camera attached sits atop a couple of coffee-table books: *Vanity Fair's Hollywood*; *Palaces of Naples*. The walls of the office are

painted in a blue-skies motif, with the words DREAM STYLE on one of them. Hanging on another wall is a clock emblazoned with the cover of his 2007 album *Planet Earth* – the only timepiece of any kind I see anywhere in Paisley Park.

Between songs, Prince laments the state of a music industry he thinks is focused on anything but music. "You're trying to find the personality first, make sure you've got that locked in," he says. "And it's better if they got scandal on 'em or a reality show or sex tape. And they have it down to an art. They're getting street cred for Justin Bieber now!"

He puts on one of the album's poppier tracks, the sweet throwback "Stophthistrain," with vocals from 3rdEyeGirl drummer Welton and her husband, Josh. I suggest, gently, that the song might fare best on the charts if no one knows of its Prince connection. He nods. "That's kind of the blessing and a curse these days," he says, "that I'm competing with [my] older music. And I don't know anybody who has to do that. They always play Beyoncé's latest track. But I go on *Oprah* and they want me to play what *they* remember."

He ends by previewing a couple of songs from what will become *Art Official Age*, excusing himself from the room when he gets to the wailing ballad "Breakdown." The breakup-themed lyrics seem particularly personal: "I used to throw the party every New Year's Eve/First one intoxicated, last one to leave/Waking up in places that you would never believe/Give me back the time, you can keep the memories." Afterward, he confirms that the song comes from a "sensitive... nude" place: "You could touch it and it would just hurt instantly."

BEFORE PRINCE SITS FOR an interview, there is another test. I sit and chat with the members of 3rdEyeGirl in a cavernous atrium, where the black carpet is decorated with Prince's old symbol and the words NPG MUSIC CLUB, and the motorcycle from *Purple Rain* is on display above. We gather on a purple couch that is noticeably frayed, and they explain their unlikely origins. The bassist, taciturn Denmark native Ida Nielsen, arrived first, joining Prince's bigger funk band, the latest incarnation of the New Power Generation, which he's still gigging with as well. Prince tells me how she beat out an old bandmate of his who

Prince on Fire

Issue 949

MAY 27, 2004

To celebrate the 20th anniversary of *Purple Rain* in 2004, Prince returned



to the spotlight in a huge way by playing with Beyoncé at the Grammys, honoring George Harrison at their mutual Rock and Roll Hall of Fame induction ceremony, and launching a hits-packed arena tour that traveled across the country with very few days off. "Let's see," he said when Anthony DeCurtis asked about the insane pace of the tour, "sleep, or half a million dollars? Sleep, or half a million dollars?"



re-auditioned: “She was eight times better than him, and she was new.”

Prince specifically wanted a female band, seeking out members via YouTube – back in 2010, he had discovered Nielsen on MySpace. “We’re in the feminine aspect now,” he says. “That’s where society is. You’re gonna get a woman president soon. Men have gone as far as they can, right? ... I learn from women a lot quicker than I do from men.... At a certain point, you’re supposed to know what it means to be a man, but now what do you know about what it means to be a woman? Do you know how to listen? Most men don’t know how to listen.”

I ask 3rdEyeGirl’s guitarist, Donna Grantis, who has a half-shaved head and Hendrixian chops, about her influences. “Prince,” she says, flatly. Her husband, a pleasant rocker dude named Trevor Guy, came along with her and ended up working closely with Prince, serving some managerial functions. (Prince believes artists shouldn’t have managers: “You should be a grown man, be able to *man*-age yourself.”) Josh, Welton’s husband, an R&B-singer-turned-producer, also became part of the Paisley family, working on some of Prince’s final albums.

They’ve all been living in a nearby hotel for a year and a half, spending at least six days a week in Paisley Park. They come off as members of a benign cult. “It’s sort of like an alternate reality,” says Grantis. “It’s an alternate universe being here, because we’re in this awesome bubble of, like, making music all day. I have no idea what the date is or what day it is.”

As we talk, I glance over my shoulder and realize that Prince has at some point materialized behind me, silently eavesdropping. He nods and moves away again into the darkness. The band and I go into the industrial kitchen, where we’re served dinner, and I am soon summoned into the control room of the complex’s Studio A, where Prince sits at the mixing desk. “This room was built in ’87, and the first record I did in here was *Lovesexy*,” he says. “We never really got this room clickin’ like any of my home studios or the hot-rodded boards I used in Los Angeles when I had a record deal. It’s real cozy and private – I just kinda wished it sounded like what goes on in my head. And I’ve been tinkering with things forever.... I suppose I will keep messing with it – or another generation will.”

GOLDEN EXPERIENCE

At the Hollywood Palladium, Los Angeles, March 7th, 2014. “I do what feels good in the moment,” Prince said.

We talk of many things, and his ban on discussing the past turns out to be slightly flexible. He makes a point of noting that his reputation as the puppet master behind the Time and even Vanity 6 was exaggerated. “It was all collaborative,” he says. “It’s not just my vision. It’s one thing to say, ‘You know what would be cool?’ and visualize it... but then you’ve got to actually find the people. [The Time’s] Morris Day is as good as any funk drummer who ever did it. And Vanity? Nobody could talk like her.” He’s most passionate and lucid when he talks about music: “‘Rock Steady’ by Aretha Franklin, ‘Cold Sweat’ by James [Brown], all the Stax records, Ike and Tina Turner – we took it for granted, thinking that music would always be like that. That was just normal to us.”

There are frequent, sometimes tricky-to-follow digressions: He seems to have branched out from his study of the Bible, which began in earnest when he became a Jehovah’s Witness under the tutelage of bassist Larry Graham. “It’s just all expanded,” he says. “Anything I believed then, I believe even more now – it’s just expanded.” While still deeply Chris- [Cont. on 64]

Tributes

Questlove

FROM THE AGE OF 11, PRINCE WAS IN MY EARS AND in my head. I patterned everything in my life after him: his fashion, his affect, his taste in women and, of course, his taste in music. I wouldn't have started listening to Joni Mitchell without him. And that led me to Jaco Pastorius, who led me to Wayne Shorter, who led me to Miles Davis. I had a simple rule: If Prince listened to it, I listened to it.

In the wake of his death, as we all try to come unstunned, everyone is talking about his genius. That's understandable. But most of the discussion is general. I like to think about the specifics. I like to think of the way he innovated even early on, the way he turned away from the traditional blueprint of funk and soul music.

Think about James Brown. Prince certainly did, as did every funk and soul artist of his generation. But Prince was brilliantly perverse in the way he absorbed him. If Brown was about a tight crack snare and percussive horns as an extended rhythmic arm, Prince went in the opposite direction – he made undeniable funk from a dud of a dead snare sound and the artificial horns of the Oberheim synthesizer.

Brown's magic streak ran between 1965 and 1975; anyone who was anybody in black music borrowed from that period. Michael Jackson borrowed dance moves. Rappers borrowed samples. But Prince looked to the period *after* that, when Brown was thought to be in decline. In soundchecks, Prince would make the Revolution endlessly play Brown's 1976 hit "Bodyheat." They'd lock into the groove and stay there. It was like Prince was using the Revolution as a sampler, and he looped that groove so that he could play along with it – and, eventually, play around with it. "It's Gonna Be a Beautiful Night," from *Sign 'O' the Times* in 1987, is a brilliant reworking of Brown's "Gravity," from 1986. Who else was really listening to Brown at that point, let alone listening sharply enough to put his music through the replicator and remake it on the spot? Only Prince, who was perhaps Brown's truest heir.

It was the 1999 track "Something in the Water (Does Not Compute)" that told me Prince was not a regular person, or a regular musician. He had removed the bass from the original demo (an innovation that would pay off even more powerfully on "When Doves Cry"), added a dizzying snare/high-hat combination and delivered his vocals in a kind of ice-cold, almost robotic manner. It wasn't just one new idea – it was several, all together; you knew from that

song and the album tracks around it ("Automatic," "Lady Cab Driver") that he was going to be the new breed leader. Stand up, organize.

After I got into the music business, I got to meet Prince several times. I roller-skated with him. I went to parties that he threw. But I always felt like a fan, never a peer. He was singular in his music – he was his own genre – and that same singularity extended to everything in his life. As he got older, the way he managed his career showed off that contrary streak. It came to the forefront in the way he mastered his records, in the way he handled reissues, in the way he used (or didn't use) the Internet. In the winter of 2012, the Revolution reunited at First Avenue in Minneapolis. They were all set up for him to join in and play. He drove right past. Prince was a great drummer, and he was always marching to his own beat. Control was Job One to him, which allowed for amazing things in the studio and onstage – unprecedented leaps of inspiration and synthesis, and energy so prolific it seemed like it would never be shut off. But there was a level of mistrust when it came to letting the outside world in.

There's so much we all don't know about him. This is what I do know: Much of my motivation for waking up at 5 a.m. to work – and sometimes going to bed at 5 a.m. after work – came from him. Whenever it seemed like too steep a climb, I reminded myself that Prince did it, so I had to also. For the past 20 years, whenever I was up at those hours, I knew that Prince was up too, somewhere, in a sense sharing a workspace with me. For the last few days, 5 a.m. has felt different. It's just a lonely hour now, a cold time before the sun comes up.



GET UP OFFA THAT THING

On his Welcome 2 America Tour at the Forum in Inglewood, California, April 14th, 2011.

Tributes

Sheila E.

A FRIEND OF MINE GAVE ME THIS huge poster of Prince's first album. I was like, "Oh, my God, he's beautiful." I took it home and put it next to my water bed. I would look at it and say, "I'm going to meet you someday." Then I saw him play. He was wearing a trench-coat, a G-string, leg warmers and boots. I met him afterward, and that was almost his normal wear. I said, "Are you sure you want to wear that outside?" I'd never seen a man dress like that. ♣ He was my favorite guitar player in the world. That's why I fell in love with him. We were playing "Purple Rain" during the *Sign 'O' the Times* tour. My eyes were closed, and I'm in a place of bliss and heaven, on the verge of crying. I opened my eyes and he asked me to marry him. I kinda said, "Yes," and we kept playing. We became friends first, then fell in love, then we fell apart. Then we became like brother and sister. I called him "honey" or "baby." He was my buddy. Music was his life, and he lived and died for it. That's his legacy.



Lenny Kravitz

PRINCE OPENED UP MY IMAGINATION and showed me where I wanted to go as an artist. Here was an African-American cat, skin color like mine, playing the guitar like I wanted to play. And not just guitar – he played nearly all the instruments on his albums, and it sounded like a band. The music, the vibe, the colors, the hair, the band – everything was amazing to me as a teenager. Through his music, he was saying, "You can do this. This is how I did it. Now you do it your way."

Later on, I got to know him as a friend. We got together all over the world: Paris, New York, Amsterdam, Minneapolis, Miami – wherever he happened to be. I would visit him at Paisley Park, which was an incredible place. It was like Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory – this larger-than-life compound that is just his world. We would go into the studio and jam, and he would film and record it. When we were done, he would hand me a cassette. He'd say, "This is just for you. I have the master tape here, and I'm gonna lock it up." Everything isn't for business. It's about the art, the moment, the memory.

He used to kick my behind at pool. His technique was amazing. He had the same attitude he had onstage; he would just come at you. Once, when I was dating [model] Vanessa Paradis, I took her to his apartment in Paris. I think we were there from 11 p.m. to, like, six in the morning. Prince asked if she wanted to play pool, thinking he was going to destroy her. And she beat him terribly. It's a great memory.

He could be incredibly funny. I remember watching a Chris Rock special at his house, and we just laughed and laughed. Another time, I hung out with him and Dave Chappelle. He loved having talented people like that around, whether they were musicians or artists or dancers or comedians.

He was a loving guy. If he liked you, he really liked you, and treated you beautifully. He could be aloof. There would be times I wouldn't hear from him for a year, then he'd show up when you least expected it. I heard about his plane making an emergency landing, and I thought, "OK, he dodged a bullet." And then, a week later, I got the news. I still haven't recovered. I really feel like a piece of me died.

Stevie Wonder

PRINCE'S MUSIC WAS SO PICTURESQUE that even I could see it. I could see his boss Mr. McGee, who thought Prince was never going to be shit. I could see Old Man Johnson's farm. I could feel that "Purple Rain" too. Prince's songs were that vivid, the images were that strong. I think I related to the way Prince saw things because we both grew up in the Midwest, where we met all kinds of people and had a great spectrum from which to learn. We both grew up hearing blues, rock & roll, jazz and gospel, and found the value in it all.

When Prince and I spoke last, we talked about how we needed to fix this world. All this bullcrap about getting our country back and "Make America Great Again" – it's always been great. We just have to stop people filling their minds with lies and prejudice

If Michael Jackson was the King of Pop, then Prince should be the Emperor.

and open them up to the possibilities.

Prince was so inspired, and so inspiring. He was kind, he was disciplined and he knew where he wanted to go. He was able to make big transitions. If Michael was the King of Pop, Prince should be the Emperor. Prince fought for his artistic freedom. He didn't allow anyone or anything to get in his way. By following his own path, Prince took music to a whole other place, like the Beatles did. He wanted to change the way things were, like Marvin Gaye did. When you do that, you have to be very sure of yourself.

That spirit that drove him gave us an incredible reservoir of music. He loved funk, so he really needed to know how to make things funky. He loved jazz, so he needed to break down what made things truly swing. If Prince wanted to talk about love and sex, he got really into that – deep. And he made us see and feel it all with him. In fact, I'm trying to figure out which child of mine was born because of listening to Prince. ♣

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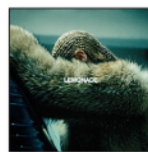
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Reviews

"Nine times out of 10
I'm in my feelings.
But 10 times out of nine
I'm only human."
—BEYONCÉ, "Love Drought"

A Pop Queen, After the Levee Breaks

Beyoncé digs deeper than ever on the most ambitious, powerful album of her career



Beyoncé

Lemonade Parkwood

★★★★★

BY ROB SHEFFIELD

What does it mean for Beyoncé to drop a new surprise album on the world within days of Prince leaving us? It's a welcome reminder that giants still walk among us. *Lemonade* is an entire album of emotional discord and marital meltdown, from the world's most famous celebrity; it's also a major personal statement from the most respected and creative artist in the pop game. All over these songs, she rolls through heartbreak and betrayal and infidelity. Yet despite all the rage and pain in the music, she makes it all seem affirming, just another chapter in the gospel according to Beyoncé: the life-changing magic of making a great big loud bloody mess.

This is the queen in middle-fingers-up mode. When the first four songs on an album add up to "you cheated on me and you will pay," then there's a country song about her daddy teaching her to solve her problems with a



Reviews

gun, it's hard not to believe Mrs. Carter might mean it when she sings about regretting the night she put that ring on it.

She begins the album as a supplicant in "Pray You Catch Me," alone with her wounded heart, and then explodes in "Hold Up," which takes the staccato strings from Andy Williams' Vegas-crooner classic "Can't Get Used to Losing You" and a chorus hook from the Yeah Yeah Yeahs' New York City punk ballad "Maps," with a Soulja Boy coda, as she mourns a husband who let all her good love go to waste.

Lemonade is her most emotionally intense music, but also her most sonically adventurous, from the Kendrick Lamar showcase "Freedom" to the country murder yarn that struts like buckskin-era early-1970s Cher ("Daddy Lessons"). Her guests range from James Blake ("Forward") to the Weeknd ("6 Inch"). She goes full-on rock-queen in "Don't Hurt Yourself," making Jack White sound feistier than he has in years, as she compares herself to a dragon breathing fire – that's an understatement – and samples the John Bonham drum thunder from "When the Levee Breaks."

Yet the most astounding sound is always Bey's voice, as she pushes to her bluesiest extremes, like the hilariously nasty way she sneers, "He's always got them fucking ex-cuuuuu-ses" and the Plastic Ono Band-style primal scream in the devastating ballad "Love Drought." She can't resist adding a happy ending with "All Night," where the couple kiss and make up and live happily ever after, or at least until morning.

Beyoncé has always aspired to superhero status. She lives up to every inch of it on *Lemonade*. Like the professional heartbreaker she sings about on "6 Inch," she just murdered everybody, and the world was her witness. **C**

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Slowhand rides again: Clapton.

A Rejuvenated Clapton, Back at the Crossroads

Eric Clapton reconnects with Glyn Johns for a vibrant album of covers and surprises

Eric Clapton *I Still Do* Bushbranch/Surfdog ★★½



Eric Clapton's 21st-century output has been erratic, but he's been best when tending to his roots – like his latter-day B.B. King collaboration, *Riding With the King*, and his mid-'00s Cream reunion and Robert Johnson tribute. His latest follows suit: a revival meeting with classic-rock swami Glyn Johns, who produced 1977's *Slowhand*. It's a set of swampy blues and well-chosen covers that finds fresh angles on the guitarist's perennial obsessions.

I Still Do also marks a welcome change from the super-club blues and beachcomber reggae of 2013's apparent retirement postcard, *Old Sock*. His guitar snarls and struts on Leroy Carr's 1930 blues classic "Alabama Woman Blues," and it slithers like an Everglades highway python on Skip James' "Cypress Grove." Johnson's "Stones in My Passway" goes to church with hand claps, squeezebox and wicked slide. Bob Dylan's "I Dreamed I Saw St. Augustine" is the most surprising cover – it seems to imagine the skeletal *John Wesley Harding* original as a *Basement Tapes* session with the Band, who inspired Clapton to trade his psychedelic frocks for darker colors way back when. You hear those tones on Clapton's own smoldering "Spiral," in which he declares, "You don't know how much this means to have this music in me." For the first time in a while, it sounds like it.

WILL HERMES



Kygo

Cloud Nine Ultra/RCA

★★★

The king of "tropical house" makes his big debut

In 2015, laid-back "tropical house" had its breakout moment, most prominently in the summery grooves of Justin Bieber's "What Do You Mean?" On his debut album, one of tropical house's biggest producers, 23-year-old Norwegian Kygo, works the dreamy midtempo flow that made him a festival star. *Cloud Nine* is very same-y – deep house wasting away in Margaritaville – but unfailingly gorgeous. Kygo's taste in anonymous vocalists ends up being a plus: Nothing distracts from the warm flow of "Firestone" or "Stole the Snow," making for an album that comes in gentle waves instead of big thuds.

CHRISTOPHER R. WEINGARTEN



John Doe

The Westerner Cool Rock

★★★½

Far-reaching Americana from a punk-rock icon

John Doe has always had a feel for American roots music, from the rockabilly rush of L.A. punk heroes X to his rangy solo projects. Doe's latest is an LP grounded in the West, full of Bakersfield twang, Mission District psych and lowlife Hollywood drama. His dusty hollers usually sound best with a woman alongside. Chan Marshall shadows him brightly on "A Little Help," a pedal-steel weeper, and Debbie Harry heats up the rowdy "Go Baby Go." Yet the highlight might be the solo acoustic "Sweet Reward," about a hard-luck dude riding a train toward redemption – it's a quintessential California tale made new. **WILL HERMES**

BRIAN RASIC/WIREIMAGE

BACKSTAGE PASS

SPECIAL OFFERS AND PROMOTIONS

Update: Nashville

Country That Crosses Over in Every Direction

SINCE TAYLOR SWIFT'S TRANSfiguration from country star to pop phenom, **Keith Urban** has been Nashville's top crossover go-getter. His last album, 2013's *Fuse*, featured contributions by Top 40 mainstays Benny Blanco and Stargate. On *Ripcord*, the Aussie singer-guitarist's most eclectic album yet, Pitbull and Nile Rodgers appear together on the booty-hound party fluff of "Sun Don't Let Me Down." Better is "The Fighter," a '10s update of an Eighties retooling of a Motown-style romantic duet with Carrie Underwood, co-produced by country-crossover golden boy Busbee (see Maren Morris' "My Church"). There's Bieber-esque soul and an old-school waltz; "Boy Gets a Truck," with its U2 lift, poignant flash-forward narrative and infuriatingly indelible stuttered rhyme scheme, is ad-ready genius. But the highlight is the 2015 hit "John Cougar, John Deere, John 3:16," which convincingly appeals to bedrock boomer values.

Even with Gwen Stefani on his arm, **Blake Shelton** stays more loyal to country, per se. (Thanks to *The Voice*, he's already one of the most visible Nashville stars in pop culture anyway.) *If I'm Honest*, his first LP recorded since breaking up with Miranda Lambert and rebounding to Stefani, opens on "Straight Outta Cold Beer," a proud bro-country solidarity anthem with apologies due for Dr. Dre. But that light moment is a feint. The polished singer goes in surprisingly deep here. "Come Here to Forget," with its synth drones and aside to Colorado weed, is a darker spin on Luke Bryan's post-breakup hit "Home Alone Tonight." And "Go Ahead and Break My Heart," with Stefani sounding like a bruised punk survivor, comes off like Kenny Rogers and Dolly Parton's "Islands in



Shelton

Keith Urban *Ripcord* ★★ ★Blake Shelton *If I'm Honest* ★★ ★Cyndi Lauper *Detour* ★★ ★

the Stream" for an age of diminished expectations.

Cyndi Lauper's "country" record, *Detour*, is just what you'd hope for in a covers set by the woman behind the hit Broadway musical *Kinky Boots*, which has done as much to mainstream cross-dressing as *RuPaul's Drag Race*. Lauper, whose most recent album, 2010's

Memphis Blues, was a spirited Southern-soul revue, wrings real pathos from the Patsy Cline signature "I Fall to Pieces" and Skeeter Davis' eternal "The End of the World." But the best tracks go for lovable camp: On Harlan Howard's "Heartache by the Number," Lauper counts off in Elvis hiccups, and on "I Want to Be a Cowboy's Sweetheart,"

Jewel delivers a yodeling cameo that's worthy of Patsy Montana. Cowgirls just wanna have fun. **WILL HERMES**



Lauper

Free Press Summer Festival

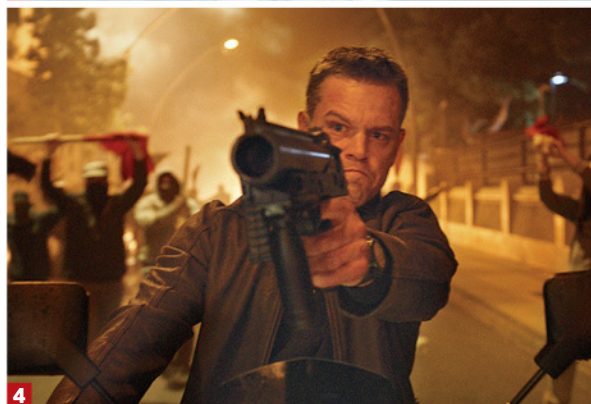
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By Peter Travers



Bring on the Major Plays

(1) Robbie and Leto plot in *Suicide Squad*. (2) Elba lifts Pine in *Star Trek Beyond*. (3) Evans suits up in *Captain America: Civil War*. (4) Damon gets back in action in *Jason Bourne*.

Summer Clone Wars

MAY

Captain America: Civil War

MAY 6

SUMMER COMES OUT BLAZING with this baby. The third in the Marvel series on Captain America (a stellar Chris Evans) proves that a comic-book epic can be smart, politically savvy and light on its feet. Take note, *Batman v Superman*. The Cap and Iron Man (Robert Downey Jr.) lock horns over collateral damage. The iron dude thinks the Avengers need U.N. supervision. The Cap disagrees. It's war. No spoilers on who sides with whom. But the Tom Holland cameo as a young Spider-Man is a knockout. So's the movie.

The Joker's back. Ditto Bourne and Captain America. But, hell, what's new under the sun?

Maybe you never heard of Conner4Real, the hip-hop phenom played by Andy Samberg in *Popstar: Never Stop Never Stopping*. Yeah, well, maybe you should kiss his ass. Connor4Real, created by Samberg and Lonely Island, is one of the rare originals in this summer's nonstop attack of the clones. I'm getting a bad vibe from Tarzan, Ben-Hur and Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles pretending they're not past their sell-by date. This guide is a search for intelligent life and rowdy fun in the universe of prequels, sequels and retreads.

Money Monster MAY 13

"I MIGHT BE THE ONE WITH the gun here, but I'm not the real criminal," says Jack O'Connell as an irate fan who goes berserk, live on air, as he threatens a TV financial guru (George Clooney) for giving him a lousy tip. Clooney and director Jodie Foster use the thriller form to get up in our faces about the economy. Good timing.

The Angry Birds Movie MAY 20

THE LOW-RENT VIDEO GAME that became a global sensation is now an animated movie. There's no telling if kids will grasp why raging adults also became obsessed with taking

a video slingshot and flinging birds into battle with pigs that stole their eggs. Jason Sudeikis voices Red, the angriest bird, making the film fun for damaged psyches of all ages.

The Nice Guys MAY 20

RUSSELL CROWE AND RYAN Gosling play angry birds themselves in Shane Black's farcical take on the crime scene in 1970s Los Angeles. Gosling is a PI, Crowe is less legit. It's a kick seeing two serious actors shake their sillies out for what Crowe calls "the pure, dumb fun of it."

X-Men: Apocalypse MAY 27

IF ANYONE CAN WAKE UP A tired franchise, it's Oscar Isaac. As the ancient god Apocalypse, he leads a mutant uprising against humanity with help from Magneto (Michael Fassbender) and resistance from Professor X (James McAvoy) and Raven (Jennifer Lawrence). A comic-book geek ("I grew up collecting *X-Factor*"), Isaac relishes pulling the rug out so that audiences "never know what to expect from me."

Alice Through the Looking Glass MAY 27

UH-OH. TIM BURTON IS OUT as director of this sequel; James Bobin is in. And then you have to wonder if Alice (Mia Wasikowska) has returned to Wonderland to save the Mad Hatter (Johnny Depp) or to duplicate the wowza \$1 billion



McCarthy, McKinnon, Wiig, Jones (from left)

Funny Girls of Summer

Ghostbusters JULY 15

THERE WAS MUCHO ONLINE BITCHING ABOUT A female reboot of 1984's *Ghostbusters*. But director Paul Feig knew there was no duplicating Bill Murray, Dan Aykroyd, Rick Moranis and Harold Ramis. So women were in. But who you gonna call? Feig rounded up Melissa McCarthy, Kristen Wiig, Kate McKinnon and Leslie Jones. When Twitter trolls cried foul about the casting, Feig tweeted back, "Grow up and leave my cast alone." Yeah, or at least wait until you see the damn movie.

global box office of 2010's *Alice in Wonderland*. With Burton back as producer, you can bet the visuals will be eye-popping.

JUNE

Popstar: Never Stop Never Stopping JUNE 3

THIS MOCKUMENTARY STARRING Andy Samberg as rap legend Connor4Real and directed by his Lonely Island BFFs Jorma Taccone and Akiva Schaffer emerges from their hilariously twisted minds – with

an assist from producer Judd Apatow – and is therefore unmissable. "Lazy Sunday," "Dick in a Box," now this. Never stop.

Warcraft JUNE 10

WHEN DIRECTOR DUNCAN Jones was a kid, his dad – David Bowie – told him to stop with the video games and play outside. Now, Jones, whose 2009 film *Moon* is a gem, has made the online *Warcraft* game an Orc-invasion movie that cost more than \$100 million. Trust in Jones.

Central Intelligence JUNE 17

CAN A SIGHT GAG SUSTAIN A big summer comedy? It can if it's funnyman Kevin Hart mixing it up at a high school reunion with Dwayne Johnson, who's a foot taller and playing a CIA killer. "We're both fitness fanatics," says Johnson, who must know a Hart can't crush a Rock.

Finding Dory JUNE 17

"HOW COME EVERY ANIMATED movie is doing a sequel except *Finding Nemo*?" That question has become a refrain for Ellen DeGeneres, who indelibly voiced Dory, the forgetful blue tang, in that Pixar smash. Now, 13 years later, DeGeneres is back in the swim as Dory, stealing scenes from Ed O'Neill, who voices Hank, a shape-shifting octopus. Expect magic.

JULY

The BFG JULY 1

IT SOUNDS LIKE A CLASSIC IN the making: Steven Spielberg directing a story by that wicked tale-spinner Roald Dahl about a giant (Mark Rylance) who refrains from eating the orphan girl (Ruby Barnhill) he protects from other giants. The script is by the late Melissa Mathison, who teamed with Spielberg on *E.T.*, another film with an intuitive understanding of childhood and loneliness. Rylance, an Oscar winner for Spielberg's *Bridge of Spies*, [Cont. on 63]



Sumpter, Sawyers in *Southside*

Under the Radar

Maggie's Plan

Writer-director Rebecca Miller knows how to make relationship comedies that pull you up short. And here, with Greta Gerwig, Ethan Hawke and Julianne Moore playing characters in lust and love, she touches a nerve. May 20

Little Men

Ira Sachs tells a small tale that uncovers large truths as two boys, beautifully played by Theo Taplitz and Michael Barbieri, find their lives inextricably altered by a Brooklyn apartment that changes hands in the family. July 15

Southside With You

You won't find a more charming romance this summer than Richard Tanne's take on a first date between two people, finely acted by Parker Sawyers and Tika Sumpter, who happen to be Barack and Michelle Obama. August 26



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Movies



GUN RUNNERS
Teller
and Hill

[Cont. from 61] plays the big friendly giant through motion capture, but still digs deep. As Spielberg says, "Dahl empowered children by giving them wishes and dreams far beyond the age of the intended readership." Spielberg does the same.

Mike and Dave Need Wedding Dates JULY 8

THE RATINGS BOARD stuck a hard "R" on this comic raunchfest about two bad-boy brothers (Zac Efron and Adam Devine) who hire "nice" dates for their sister's wedding. Anna Kendrick and Aubrey Plaza play the women who don't come as advertised. Love the way Kendrick says "cockbusters."

Star Trek Beyond JULY 22

THE BIG NEWS HERE IS the presence of the powerhouse Idris Elba as the badass alien out to get all up in the Federation business of Kirk (Chris Pine) and Spock (Zachary Quinto). How great to hear Elba spit out the threat "This is where the Frontier pushes back."

Jason Bourne JULY 29

MATT DAMON RETURNS to the role that made a franchise, and I, for one, am

stoked. It's been nearly a decade since Damon played the amnesiac CIA operative in *The Bourne Ultimatum*—Jeremy Renner filled in as another agent in 2012's *The Bourne Legacy*—but Damon is the Man. The actor, 45, says it was "brutal" getting into fighting shape for a film that propels Bourne into a world of financial collapse, race warfare and cyberterrorism. Bring it on.

AUGUST

Suicide Squad AUGUST 5

CAN THE DC COMICS UNIVERSE emerge from the wounding word-of-mouth that greeted *Batman v Superman*? Optimism is high about *Suicide Squad*, a mission for good carried out by a killer collection of villains, including Deadshot (Will Smith), Harley Quinn (Margot Robbie) and, of course, the Joker (Jared Leto). For Leto, it was tough working in the shadow of two great Jokers—Jack Nicholson in 1989's *Batman*, and the late Heath Ledger, who won an Oscar for the role in 2008's *The Dark Knight*. Leto never broke character or spoke to his co-stars. In his words, playing the Joker was "like giving birth out of my prick hole." Ouch!

The Founder AUGUST 5

MICHAEL KEATON, A great actor who has never won an Oscar, even for *Birdman*, gets another shot by playing Ray Kroc, the McDonald's founder who hit pay dirt by kicking the McDonald brothers (Nick Offerman and John Carroll Lynch) to the curb.

Florence Foster Jenkins

AUGUST 12

MERYL STREEP, A GREAT actress who can't stop winning Oscars, goes for the gold again as a New York socialite who dreams of opera stardom. There's a setback, says Streeper: "She can't sing." The film is hilarious and surprisingly touching.

War Dogs AUGUST 19

SUMMER'S LAST SURPRISE blast is based on Guy Lawson's 2011 *ROLLING STONE* article about two amateur Miami scammers, played by Jonah Hill and Miles Teller, who hustle a \$300 million weapons deal for arming U.S. allies in Afghanistan. You expect director Todd Phillips to clone his trilogy of *Hangover* hits. Instead, he delivers a black-comic punch to capitalism in modern warfare. **B+**

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CHRIS EVANS

[Cont. from 39] “One of my buddies from Boston,” says Evans. “With my mom in town, some of the guys I grew up with who live here now are coming through to say hello to Ma Dukes.”

A moment later, Evans’ old friend Demery walks in, carrying his 11-month-old son, Noah. “What up, man?” Evans says.

“Sup, brother?” says Demery, high-fiving him. “You good?”

Demery retires to the patio with Noah and Evans’ mom to chat. “It’s nuts,” says Evans. “D has a kid, man. He’s his whole world. I really want them. My sister has kids – they’re seven, five and three – and going home and being around them feels great. I’m really trying to have kids soon. Certain things have to fall in place.”

Like what? Evans laughs. “Gotta find a wife.” He’s been linked to actresses including Minka Kelly, Lily Collins and a pre-Timberlake Jessica Biel, but right now, he says he’s single. (His date at this year’s Oscars was his sister Carly.)

Evans calls *Civil War*, definitively, “the last installment of *Captain America*.” In November, he heads to Atlanta for back-to-back filming on the third and fourth *Avengers*. “Like, 10 months,” he says of the shoot. “Ugh. My body’s gonna fall apart.” Downey says Marvel movies are like the presidency, in that they age you prematurely: “I hope he’s enjoying this moment, where he’s still tall and blue-eyed and handsome.”

Avengers 4 is the last Marvel film that Evans is committed to. His original contract had him through three only, but like Downey – whose contract ended after *Iron Man 3* and who’s been negotiating huge re-ups for every one since – Evans extended for one more. Better believe he got paid for it, too. “Oh, yeah,” he says, laughing. “They didn’t punch their Chris Evans card – like, ‘You get the seventh one free!’ Yeah, no.”

Evans is supposed to leave the house at five to catch a private jet to Phoenix, where he and co-star Sebastian Stan are going to surprise the audience at a *Civil War* sneak preview. A few minutes later, his friend and assistant Josh comes in carrying a green juice (Evans: “Is that for me? Sweet!”) and reminds him that it’s 4:40.

“It’s 4:40?” Evans says, leaping up from the couch. “Oh, shit! I gotta go!” All of a sudden, the panic sets in. “I have to shower,” he says, looking frantic. “They can’t leave without me, right?”

But then he takes a breath. “Wait, wait.” The car may be coming at five, but he doesn’t have to be there until six. And they’re flying from Burbank, just 25 minutes away. He’s got plenty of time. “It’s OK,” he says, exhaling. “Everything is OK.”

A FINAL VISIT WITH PRINCE

[Cont. from 53] tian, he’s also spent time studying what appears to be an Afro-centric interpretation of history, along with the physics of sound, some Eastern ideas (chakras are “science,” he says) and a selection of unabashed conspiracy theories. He has thoughts on the JFK assassination (“The car slows down – why doesn’t it speed up?”); AIDS (“It’s rising in some communities, and it’s not rising in others – any primate could figure out why”); and the airplane trails known in some circles as chemtrails (“Think about *where* they appear, *why* they appear, how often and what particular times of the year”).

At one point, the phone rings: It’s the young British singer-songwriter Delilah. Prince’s voice suddenly gets even deeper. “I know it’s late there,” he purrs into the handset. “I’m going to *will* you awake.” On a possibly related note, Prince says he’s unsure if he’ll marry again. “That’s another thing that’s up to God,” he says. “It’s all magnetism anyway – something would pull me into its gravity, and I wouldn’t be able to get out from it.”

We take a break and head to Paisley Park’s empty nightclub, where 3rdEyeGirl are waiting onstage. “I can take you out there and hit this guitar for you,” Prince promised earlier, “and what you’ll hear is sex. You will hear something where you’d run out of adjectives, like you do when you meet the finest woman.” He wants to prove that 3rdEyeGirl can activate my chakras, so he seats me on a stool onstage, no more than three feet away from him. He picks up a custom Vox guitar – the brand some of James Brown’s guitarists played. “You’re gonna start vibrating in a second,” he tells me, and kicks the band into the fiery Seventies fusion instrumental “Stratus,” tearing through solos that arc endlessly upward. He warned of goose bumps, and delivers.

Afterward, the band does a photo shoot in Studio C – one shot is intended for the cover of a “Stophisttrain” single that never actually comes out. Prince disappears for a while before returning with a MacBook that has Delilah live on Skype – he shows her the shoot via webcam. It’s past midnight when we begin talking again. He mentions a desire to mentor Chris Brown, says he invited him to Paisley Park. I note that some people think what Brown did to Rihanna was unforgivable. He’s shocked. “Unforgivable?” he says. “Goodness. That’s when we go check the master, Christ.... Have you ever instantly forgiven somebody?” I shake my head. “It’s the best feeling in the world, and it totally dismantles that person’s whole stance.”

He talks more about mentoring and helping peers, so I wonder aloud if he

thinks he could’ve forestalled Michael Jackson’s fate. “I don’t want to talk about it,” Prince says at first. “I’m too close to it.” He goes on: “He is just one of many who have gone through that door – Amy Winehouse and folks. We’re all connected, right, we’re all brothers and sisters, and the minute we lock that in, we wouldn’t let anybody in our family fall. That’s why I called Chris Brown. All of us need to be able to reach out and just fix stuff. There’s nothing that’s unforgivable.”

He seems to be hinting at past problems of his own, so I ask if he was ever self-destructive. His eyebrows shoot up. “Self-destructive? I mean... do I *look* self-destructive?” This leads him to a disquisition on why he avoids talking about the past. “People say, ‘Why did you change your name?’ and this, that and the other. I’m here right now, doing what I’m doing right now, and all of the things I did led up to this. And there is no place else I’d rather be than right now. I want to be talking to you, and I want you to *get* it.”

We talk about retirement. “I don’t know what that is,” he says. “There’s always some way to serve.... It feels like I’m teaching at a school, but also a student at one. I never felt like I had a job – does that make sense? So those words, job and retire...”

He tries to explain why he can imagine playing into old age, with a dizzying detour into mysticism via the Wachowskis. “Life spans are getting longer,” he says. “One of the reasons is because people are learning more about everything, so then the brain makes more connections. Eventually, we’ll be in eternal brain mode because we’ll be able to hold eternity in our minds. A lot of people can’t do that. If you can’t think all the way *back* eternally, you can’t think all the way *forward* eternally. Everybody usually thinks about a beginning, a big bang. If you take that event out, then you can start to see what eternity is. Remember in *The Matrix* where they said the only thing that has an ending had a beginning, and vice versa?”

It’s nearly 2 a.m., and Prince is done for the night. He walks me through the depths of Paisley Park, his shoes glowing in the dark, to retrieve my jacket and bag. As we walk, I hear doves cry – actual doves that live in a cage somewhere in the rafters. As I put on my coat, Prince invites me to join the band in London. The zipper catches badly on the way up. “Fuck,” I say, and my host looks stricken.

“So much for not cursing,” he says.

I apologize. Prince looks me in the eyes, and wraps me in a tight hug. I am, as promised, dismantled by his instant forgiveness. I can still feel that embrace as I walk outside, where moonlight shines on a thick layer of immaculate, freshly fallen snow.

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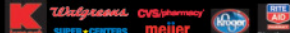
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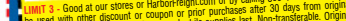
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Florence Welch

The singer on loving Green Day, learning to be vulnerable, and how to handle a panic attack

What's the most British thing about you?

I'm attracted to things that aren't simply pretty – there has to be an element of darkness to it, like the beauty of the smog. That comes from growing up in London. I also find it very hard to say something intimate without following it with a joke. "Quickly, make it sarcastic! Pull it back!" I don't know if that's a British thing or just a Welch family thing.

What's your favorite book as a child?

Little House on the Prairie. For Christmas, my aunt gave me and my sister little custom smock prairie dresses, and we would make a prairie in our house, with a lake made out of towels. I may have sensed something unsettled in my parents' marriage; they eventually divorced. The book might have symbolized some kind of domesticity or stability to me.

What's the most recent book you've read?

I've been reading Patti Smith's *M Train*. She's given us some really beautiful parts of herself with her [two memoirs]. It's incredibly inspiring the way she can truly be herself in the public eye.

What are your earliest musical memories?

My dad has great taste; he used to play me the Velvet Underground, the Smiths and the Stones. He was excited when I got to sing "Gimme Shelter" with Mick Jagger. He said, "You know, I always thought that was the song you were supposed to sing."

It's hard to imagine, but you were really into skate punk.

The first CD I ever bought was Green Day's *Dookie*. It was my first clue that there could be a whole identity around the music you liked. I had the shoes and the world's baggiest cords. The only thing I didn't have was a skateboard.

You even recorded a complete cover of Green Day's *Nimrod* a few years ago.

I was going to see punk bands, and [producer-artist] Dev Hynes and I bonded. We were talking about how we loved *Nimrod*, and we recorded it in his kitchen with just his guitar. It's out there on the Internet! Later, I met Billie Joe Armstrong, and he told me he liked it. My 13-year-old self's head was exploding somewhere in the past.

What is the best part of success?

I love to experiment, to create a world to get lost in. I can do that as a job, down to the outfits and the staging.

Do you ever go too far into that world?

I can go off into flights of fancy, and they're not always positive. I can panic quite easily. Sometimes, I have to breathe and be like, "Actually, what's

happening right now? Is that real? You're in your house, nothing is actually happening. Oh, OK."

What's the best advice you've ever received?

When I got off tour a few years ago, I tried to keep living as I had been. You want to keep the party going, but you're just in your own house. I was like, "Oh, my life is in chaos, and my relationships are so messed up. What am I doing?" A friend said, "Why don't you try not drinking for a while – see what happens?" [Laughs] I was willing to try anything at that point. It definitely helped me write my last record.

How do you relax when you're not on tour?

When you're on the road, you're like, "Oh, my God, touring is so stressful." Then you come back and struggle to fit in all these things that you miss from normal life – seeing friends, seeing my mom.

You've got to do your own laundry, too, and I can even stress myself out about getting enough rest. By the time I have to leave again, I kind of want to get back on tour, because I can finally relax.

You and Adele sang in the same club early in your careers. What do you remember from that night?

I think it was in the Lock Tavern in Camden – tiny room, lots of people crowding around. I did my yelling kind of singing, and then she came on and sang and just played her guitar. I couldn't really see her, but this voice just lifted up over the people, and I was like, "That is an extremely special voice." I went home and wrote a song immediately, though it wasn't up to the level of "Rolling in the Deep."

What's an important rule to live by?

If something feels different, or uncomfortable, it means you're growing. My last album was quite exposing. Not having effects on my vocals was terrifying. I would ask my producer, "Please, can you just put some reverb on?" I was nearly crying. He was like, "No, you have to just let your voice be the way it is. You have to be vulnerable."

What advice would you give your younger self?

There are certain sartorial choices I would not make, in hindsight. I had black lipstick. I was wearing capes stapled to me. I got famous when I was about 21. It was totally thrilling and also completely terrifying. You're scared and want something to shield you, so you think you've got to have more hair, more makeup. To live in this creation, in this kind of magical alternate universe, kept me safe. But I wouldn't take any of that back. I would just say to that person, "It's going to be OK."

INTERVIEW BY DAVID BROWNE



Florence and the Machine's U.S. tour runs May 13th-June 19th.

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